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ABSTRACT

This book examines career development (CD) support in organizations and presents guidelines for provision of CD activities by employers. The following topics are discussed: career management (the changing work environment, the employer's role, shared responsibility, CD principles, CD theory, and understanding CD support); career support systems (first steps, targeting CD efforts, employees' concerns, the need for a model, resources for organizations, CD support techniques, and reductions in force); career counseling (employer involvement, counseling in practice, counseling client management, and supporting the client); coaching and mentoring (bosses as coaches rather than counselors, the value and art of mentoring, and employer-initiated mentor programs); workshops and workbooks (types of CD workshops, workshop content, workbooks, and custom-designed workbooks); software, assessment, and resource centers (career information, computer-based career support, computer-based guidance system and career information delivery system software, evaluation of career software, career assessment instruments, career support staff resources, and innovative services); and career systems evaluation (CD program and mentoring program measurement and career program, career support staff, workshop, and resource center evaluation). The bibliography lists 109 references. (MN)

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Career Development

Support in Organisations

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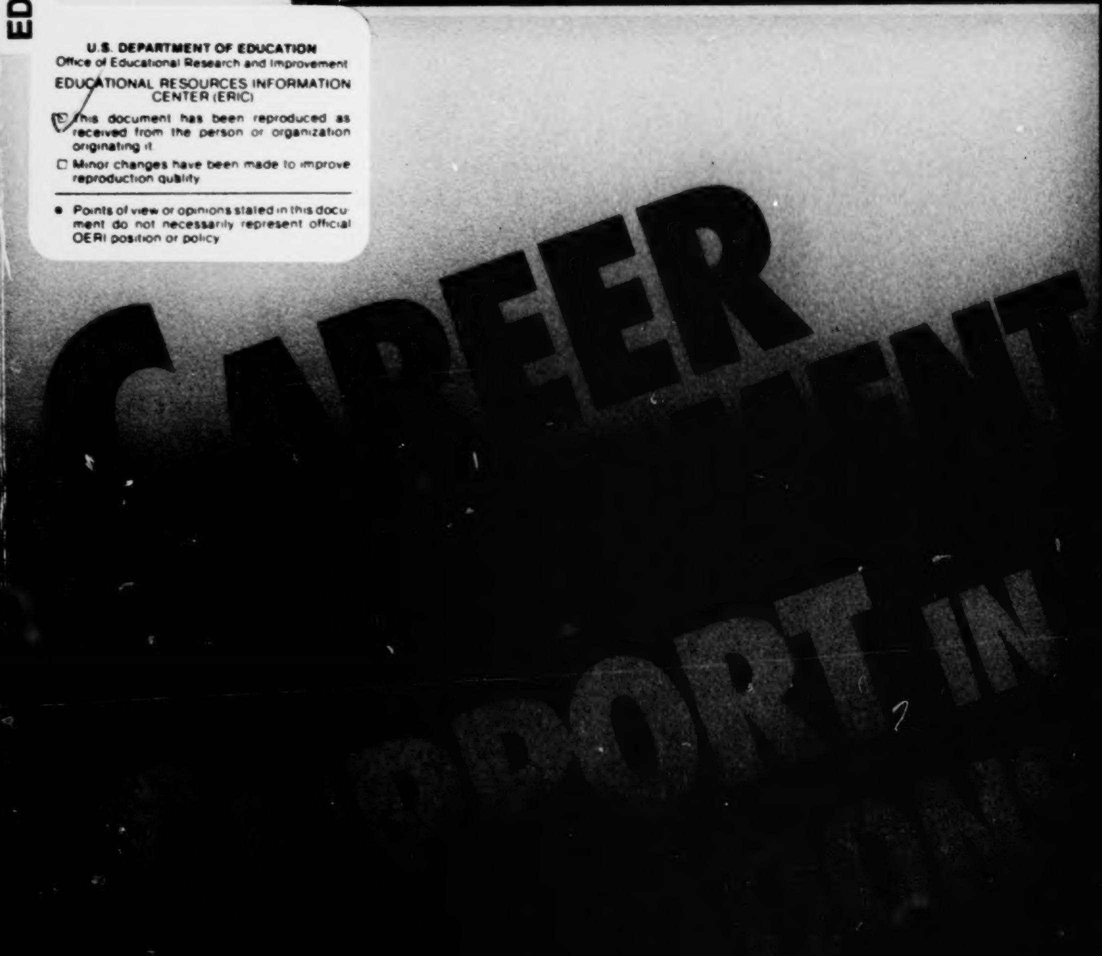

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Career Development Support in Organisations

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About the Author

After twenty-one years' employment experience as a Personnel Manager dealing with the problems of employer/employee relationships in the UK, Canada and Australia, Paul Stevens created The Centre for Worklife Counselling in 1980. His concern for individuals and their search for satisfaction in work motivates his daily counselling and teaching activities and his writing. He has become nationally known as a counsellor, broadcaster and author of 27 publications on worklife and career management issues. While continuing his counselling practice, he has been engaged by organisations to advise on their career development activities and to assist in organisational restructuring where it has an impact upon the job satisfaction of employees. His national Worklife Agency Network now provides a range of career development services to individuals and employers in all States of Australia. Paul continues to extend his work to include career support to members of religious orders and consultancy services to State Governments, devising innovative measures which assist both employer and employee to cope with change.

An Explanation—Worklife

The Centre for Worklife Counselling often provokes comment about its name. The term 'Worklife' was chosen to reflect our continuing work in research, counselling, training and publishing material which relates to improving people's enjoyment from their employment activities and other aspects of their lives. We do not accept the traditional view of career counselling—that is, to help people acquire satisfaction only from their working hours. We consider that occupational satisfaction can only occur when a person's total needs are included in the assessment of what is lacking and what needs to be done to increase inner well-being, improved relationships with others, and effective performance both at work and non-work activities. The word 'life' in Worklife means our focus is on the total person The word 'work' relates to the roles in which the person is involved (employee, student, homecarer, and citizen) and their environments (workplace, educational institution, home, community). Ours is a holistic approach—we try to consider all features of a person at the same time as maintaining a respect for personal privacy by the use of non-threatening inquiries into their thoughts and circumstances.

1 Career Management

Our Changing Work Environment

Our contemporary work and living environment is characterised by enormous change. Career and life planning has become essential, not only for the young but for adults of any age. Individuals are often immobilised by change and uncertainty, whether in their worklife or social situation. Deciding on career plans and next career action steps is a complex process, influenced by a range of factors. These include the varied needs of youth, of those in midlife and the mature aged; the differing development of women's and men's worklife; the effects of ethnicity, age and gender; and the structure of employment and labour market constraints and opportunities at any given moment in the career review process. An awareness of these changes and constants has significantly altered the nature and scope of career support for counsellors, trainers, human resource management professionals, careers advisers, workforce planners, and adult educators.

Employers also have concerns about their employees: these include the demotivating effects of insecurity about continued employment, sometimes apathy, the loss of work colleagues through redundancy and the apparent sense of helplessness in evidence among many in the workforce—often at a time when energies are needed to restore the organisation to new purpose and productivity.

In career development, the pendulum has swung away from the view that employers are responsible and accountable for the career progress of their staff. In the past all employees were expected to do to ensure career advancement was to work hard and competently. The consensus view about career management today emphasises the shared responsibility, but separate role, of the employee and employer. Concern centres more on how far an employer should intrude into the personal plans and circumstances of their staff; on how to integrate individual and organisational needs and contain conflict between them; and on how to help employees develop their career preferences, yet meet business plan goals.

People will stay in the employ of an organisation if they expect that their future work will be desirable to them. To induce this commitment, information needs to be shared about what to expect in job assignments, career path opportunities, likely pay levels, methods of appraising performance, the standards of work required and other outcomes important to them. Ignorance of these can breed ill-founded assumptions. In turn, these assumptions can result in unrealistic beliefs, even fear.

At each step of their career, every employee is influenced by the career management actions of employers. Choice of employer is influenced by recruiting programs, and choice of job is influenced by selection practices. Performance on the job and opportunities for personal development are influenced by the design of the job and the existence of or lack of performance objectives. Voluntary redundancy, resignation or early retirement are influenced by the benefits provided, other financial inducements and the changing circumstances of personal needs.

A major career development task for an organisation is how to balance the individual's needs for freedom and growth with the organisation's needs for productivity and operational results. For this task to have a chance of success, the employing organisation must develop a commitment to empowering its employees. They must be able to acquire the information they need to make informed and realistic career action choices and should be given help to communicate those choices to the relevant people within the organisation.

The quest for personal satisfaction in worklife is far from new. Yet to arrive at a point where the unique characteristics of a person are comfortably matched with a particular occupation is a complex procedure which will need to be repeated more than once during their lifetime. As we change in age, physical abilities, personal circumstances and maturity, so do our wants, needs and preferences in terms of what we like doing in our work tasks. Our environment is also far from static. The supply and demand for certain sets of skills and experiences fluctuates. Occupations disappear and new ones emerge as technology influences the manner in which work is carried out. Our economy affects the prosperity or otherwise of different industries and, in turn, the requirements of employers for trained people.

What is known is that people need to become competent in managing the direction of their own worklives, to become less reliant on their employer to provide the satisfiers without themselves making the effort to define what they want. Most need some assistance with this process. The design and maintenance of career support systems and worklife counselling have evolved to meet this need.

Employer's Role

Why should an employer make an effort with career support initiatives? Why should funds be allocated, or diverted, to support the research, staffing, design and implementation of career development support systems? If employees want help, why shouldn't they pay for it themselves, as some have in the past?

An employer's efforts in supporting staff in this area can be justified on a pragmatic business analysis basis. It is not just another fashionable personnel procedure. There is potential for a realistic return on the investment of such funds, as well as distinct realisable benefits to the organisation.

In this decade the aspirations of our workforces are being expressed more vocally. Their career futures are going to be characterised more by lateral and horizontal trans-functional career changes than by vertical moves. Up is not the only way to go, as many people demonstrate by electing to pursue other quests in order to improve the quality of their life. Others are being forced by personal circumstances to choose alternative directions that are not hierarchically orientated. Now that organisation structures have been flattened, up is not the only way to go, unless employees want to join the long queue.

☛ *Our career futures are going to be characterised more by lateral and horizontal career changes than by the vertical.*

The strongest argument in favour of employer-initiated career development support systems relates to an inherent quality in human nature: I have never met an employee who would not like to become more worthwhile. The issue in career development is not the motivation of employees to participate in the process, but the identification and selection of appropriate techniques and procedures to help them. By helping employees with their careers, organisations, in turn, help themselves.

To ignore the need to assist staff with their career development is to ignore the change in attitudes towards working life that has taken place in the last decade. Moreover, the rate of information and technological change must be matched by efforts to help employees prepare for multiple careers and avoid the corporate costs of individual obsolescence.

The mutual dependence of career effectiveness and life satisfaction is now more widely recognised than it has been in the past. Both career effectiveness and life satisfaction are tied to people's quest for liberation and satisfactory forms of personal growth. In essence, it is about individual empowerment—the development of those skills and attitudes which enhance people's ability to exercise maximum control over their lives.

Transfer and promotion actions: Changing the jobs of current employees is less costly than external recruitment. While risks cannot be eliminated completely, there are fewer risks with a current employee than a person new to the organisation. To be able to transfer or promote from within, management has a responsibility to develop, work with and get to know staff better so that they can assess whether there are more appropriate task responsibilities for them and ensure that their needs for career progression are met. As the environments in which organisations operate are constantly changing, this also enables management to staff for newly emerging skill requirements.

To reduce the hazards of such moves, a substantial employer-initiated effort is required. Employees need to be given career counselling and career coaching to facilitate their internal career transitions and provide satisfactory outcomes for their employer. This requires staff who are skilled in understanding and interpreting the interaction that takes place over the period of a person's worklife between aspiration, individual preferences, self-discovery, education, the influence of others, opportunity taken or foregone, and the host of other experiences which make up a person's life.

People's expectations: Human resources are the main asset employers have when combating a threat to organisational well-being, whether it is loss of market share, technological change or government policy. People are needed to achieve new goals and overcome new threats. Yet these people have expectations about their employment life beyond the performance of their job tasks. The nature of these expectations has not fundamentally altered over the ages, but they are now expressed more assertively. Subjugation to power, submissive behaviour and working in unpleasant conditions are no longer accepted without protest or dysfunctional behaviour arising in the workplace. It is unwise for management today to ignore the more significant expectations people express, such as preservation of their personal dignity at work, involvement in decisions which affect them, and the desire to contribute more widely than the restraints of the current job allow. There are many facets to career development support that can facilitate these expectations being met. There is little danger in high expectations among employees if these result directly from career development support. High expectations are compatible with realistic expectations if employees are provided with accurate information on which to base them. It is an opportune time to secure the cooperation of employees, rather than to ignore their potential to help the organisation survive and grow.

Figure 1

CRITICAL OBJECTIVE

To change attitudes of staff from expecting advice to self-directed exploration and self-initiated career planning

Organisational change: Career development concerns itself with improved change. Organisations in Australia are currently in a state of fundamental change. Of the top 500 companies in Australia, more than 50 per cent have either been taken over or merged in the past six years. Other reasons for implementing change include the need for increased international competitiveness, achieving a reduction in the cost of the public sector while still maintaining service levels, the increasing use of new technologies and a recognition of the benefits of new ways of organising work, and gaining more cooperation from employees. To facilitate these changes, the complex task of workplace reform needs to be undertaken.

Change should be strategic and planned. For plans to ride out organisational problems and emerge in a stronger form to succeed, managers must take action for change that is thoroughly thought out and implemented. If employees are to respond flexibly and adapt to the changes demanded of them, it is important that they feel they have some degree of influence over the direction of their careers and that they are employed within a culture that values them as people. Career development practices provide a vehicle for this, as the emphasis placed on the behavioural area of management science contributes to the understanding of organisational behaviour and the employee's role within it. Without this understanding, management actions are not likely to have the desired effect within the required time frame.

Career development support needs to be designed to motivate people and encourage creativity, not suppress them, stimulate resistance or frustrate their career aspirations. Just as most organisations seek to manage their enterprises by diverse approaches, rather than a rigid management style, so, too, is the career development support approach for individuals similarly diverse. It incorporates multiple careers, and changes in ambition, interests and needs during employment. To prevent employees 'going stale', mobility programs which incorporate the changes that take place within individuals are required. The traditional assumption that there is a way to make an individual fit any given job through the 'right training and management' is now discounted and is regarded as impractical, inappropriate and not cost effective.

Collaboration: The implementation of plans for organisational change requires a high degree of collaboration between people and work groups, an open climate in which organisations strive for full optimisation of employees' competencies. The ease with which career development support can be developed in response to a particular problem, and tailored to suit the culture of the organisation, makes it an appealing aid in achieving management's goals.

Managers need to be encouraged to see the adoption or expansion of career development support as beneficial rather than just another operational activity loaded onto an already busy task schedule. Managers may need to be given the opportunity to learn about and debate the practicality of implementing such career direction alternatives as dual-career ladders, lateral moves, project assignments, matrix management and self-determining work groups. Career development practitioners need to evolve a regular program of management briefings, actively promoting their endeavours, rather than delaying attention to careers for contingency events such as re-organisations, take-overs, economic recessionary reactions or downsizing requirements before doing so.

Award restructuring: The rewriting of Awards—both Federal and State—is in progress. The objective is to make their contents more appropriate to modern economic, technological and industrial circumstances. Award restructuring has the potential to stimulate change in a number of areas, including skill formation, training and working patterns and arrangements. It will widen employment opportunities for employees and re-define a broader range of career paths. With award restructuring comes the need for managers to audit and review the skills used in their workplace closely, identify skill shortages and develop actions which will improve the structural efficiency of the organisation.

Changing the legal base of the employer-employee conditions and relationship and conducting a skills audit is but one step. The next is to assist employees to adjust to the changes and new career path facilities provided. They also need to be taught how to use them to enhance their own career development actions. An efficient and effective process of award restructuring implies improving the efficiency of the employer, concurrent with providing employees with access to more varied jobs. Career development support has a vital role in these endeavours.

Assistance to dual-career couples: The complex dynamics of dual-career couple situations have significant ramifications for career development policy and practices. The dilemma the organisation faces is to determine how far it should go in involving itself with the personal relationships and non-work life of its employees. As most people consider the two most important things in their lives are loving and working, the least an organisation can offer is facilities for voluntary participation in programs and counselling support for those concerned with these issues. This will assist the resolution of conflicting demands that invariably affect work performance. How to make satisfactory trade-offs and compromises between career and relationships are, for example, two topics where assistance can be offered. But organisational staff who elect to provide this assistance should explore the many ramifications before intervening in this way.

With the growing number of dual-career couples in the workforce, and in many instances both parties being with the same employer, organisations should think creatively about developing multiple career paths and designing work systems which allow for a healthy fusion of the family life and work of members. Alternative work patterns, structured mentoring relationships and participation in decisions to transfer or relocate are but some of many issues that could be addressed by career development support systems.

Work and family: There is an urgent need for more organisations to develop procedures to accommodate the social revolution that is occurring. Social changes are resulting in major changes in our attitudes towards work: the right of women to pursue careers on an equal basis with males; similarly, the rights of minority groups to have equal employment opportunities; the rights of workers to a safe and secure environment; and the growing rights of workers to be legitimately involved in some of the decisions involving their own work and future careers.

Organisations must deal with the shifting needs of their staff and the interaction of family and work. Career development facilities need to be designed not only for the different age and sex groupings of employees but also so that they are relevant to the varying stages of their individual career life cycles. Care should be taken that each of these wide-ranging and different needs is attended to and that individual groupings do not appear to be favoured with help over others.

Help is required for women to cope with their stressors—those that are created in their work environment and those that stem from their homes. Counselling support help is required for male managers to come to terms with women as managers and cooperate in team management processes with less obvious feelings of threat. If employers value the fact that the women they are employing are training and preparing for more senior responsibilities, assistance on 'how to do my personal career planning' should be an integral part of skills development. Women need to be assisted with their career planning before being promoted, and should be given practice at developing such plans.

Equal employment opportunity and affirmative action: Both have undergone radical change over the past decade. No Federal or State legislation existed 17 years ago. Now legislation has prompted all employers with more than 100 employees to pay attention to the specified requirements, most of which relate to the career management practices of organisations. Equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation at first focused on the recruitment process, but it now encompasses the internal career progression process of all employees.

Equal employment opportunity, personal privacy and anti-discrimination guidelines are creating new demands for objectivity from management. Career support procedures can support such programs.

Beyond opening certain job categories to women and minorities, affirmative action ultimately alters recruitment and selection procedures, paper and pencil tests, pre-employment health assessments, selection interviews and other screening devices. As well, pension plans, compensation systems, performance appraisal processes, job analysis and classification systems, and facilities for job bidding, and training and development are all affected. A properly designed career development support program has a direct EEO and affirmative action benefit at every stage.

Before equity can be achieved and, most importantly, be seen to be achieved, there is a need for clearer job definitions and for the specification of the skills required to perform them. From this evolves the additional need to give those responsible for selection, promotion and transfer decisions training in how to evaluate people in terms of their skill competencies and required knowledge rather than the now outdated practice of evaluating the length of periods of experience and/or level of formal qualifications. In this way, individual differences will be acknowledged and appraised in a more equitable manner than the prevailing value-matching approach taken within many organisations.

Career development theory and practice has significant implications for the design and implementation of practical EEO and affirmative action program activities. The current emphasis is to provide support systems which match the changing needs of the individual employee's life. When they provide help to an employee, EEO and career development staff will need to take care that the essential intertwining of the occupational career with the other domains of life is not ignored. This often means that career decisions which seem irrational to the observer in occupational terms may nevertheless be rational in terms of the stability of the employee's total life. Each person will have a unique orientation to their employment environment. Attempts will need to be made to identify them, and different career management strategies are likely to be appropriate for those whose orientations differ markedly.

Shared Responsibility

The responsibility for **career planning** clearly rests with the individual, while the responsibility for **career development support** should be the employer's. The employee has the ultimate control over the critical variables: whether to stay in the organisation; whether to seek or accept new job assignments; and whether to strive for higher performance and personal growth. All an employer can do is provide training and information services that have a bearing on these personal career decisions.

When management fails to fulfil this career support role, individuals making career action decisions fill the gap by making their own assumptions about opportunities, often based on inadequate data. While career planning should remain the individual's responsibility, many lack the information, skills, insights or, sometimes, the initiative to determine their own career plans effectively. Employees need help with their career planning responsibility. Career planning training helps them:

- To analyse their interests, values, goals and capabilities
- To consider available options
- To make decisions relating to their current job
- To establish personal development plans that are likely to bring the results they merit and, in turn, benefit the employer

Career planning is the individual employee's counterpart to the employer's overall human resource planning process; and if the needs of both are to be satisfied, the two processes should be coordinated by the personnel or training function.

Career Development Principles

There are several beliefs which influence the methods used in career development services and the outcomes of such support. In summary they are:

- It is important for people to plan their futures
- A life plan should retain flexibility. For example, it is likely that students leaving secondary education this year will change careers an average of 4.5 times during their working lifetime. Those currently in their forties are part of a generation making an average of 2.8 distinct changes from one occupation to another
- Learning the skills of career planning and self-management is an integral part of total personal development

- Self-knowledge is critical for successful decision making
- People need to have, and maintain in the face of constant change, an accurate knowledge of career paths that suit their unique natures and their changing needs and preferences
- If people are to derive satisfaction from their work they must have a sense of accomplishment. Among other things, this implies that they need to be familiar with goal-setting techniques. Without a clearly defined target, there will be no sense of accomplishment when it is reached
- People need to develop the ability to overcome career-related setbacks; they should not hesitate to seek guidance when they experience job loss, confusion about their career direction or have inadequate information
- Everyone perceives some form of constraint to their career progress. These perceived constraints are likely to include one or more of the following: poor health, wrong socio-economic origin, inadequate or inappropriate education, gender stereotyping, wrong age, commitments to non-work circumstances, poor self-concept, and geographical location restrictions. Counselling should be readily available at these times
- Though the match between occupation and person may be accurate, the employment environment in which the job is carried out may not be. Where this is the case, most will experience negative job elements, such as feelings of being in a rut, being undervalued or overstretched, the sense that doors to advancement are closed, or uncongenial supervision and/or co-workers

Often when a manager makes a career proposal to an employee, that person will stop gathering the information needed for a rational assessment of alternative career paths and surrender too readily to that proposal. They avoid evaluating whether the change is in both their own interests and those of the employer. Career development decisions should involve the blending of the changing needs of the individual and the organisation.

Career development has different meanings to different people within an organisation.

To the employee, career development can mean:

- Performing well and further improving their performance in current job
- Showing commitment and interest in growth, taking initiative to develop self
- Assessing goals, choices and abilities, determining career goals
- Matching goals with organisational needs
- Planning for development and increased well-being

To the line manager, career development can mean:

- Matching an individual's skills and interests to the organisation's needs
- Giving helpful feedback on performance
- Discussing performance and personal development with employees
- Selecting work assignments, training and education, special projects
- Being a mentor and a coach for employees
- Recognising that career development does not mean grooming every employee for management

To executive management of the organisation, career development can mean:

- Developing the long-term capabilities of the organisation
- Providing information on the organisation's mission and direction
- Being aware of employee concerns regarding development and their future
- Implementing systems and providing resources for human resource development
- Rewarding managers for developing their employees

Career Development Theory

There is as yet no single comprehensive theory, or model, that explains all the factors that determine how a person—teenager or adult—can be reliably 'matched' to a specific career or can make a career change that is guaranteed to be successful. Career development theory is a young science. The findings to date are more of the nature of collected observations and regularities, which are not always consistent with each other.

Career development is therefore a multi-theory science; no single theory has an absolute majority of agreement among researchers and career counselling practitioners. Despite this disparity of views, career development theories do have the useful function of helping us to organise empirical observations of how people choose and develop their careers.

Two quite divergent approaches in career development theory have been developing for some time. The one with the longest history may be described as the matching of people with the content of jobs. The general focus of this procedure is to determine the skill aptitude and temperament requirements of particular occupations and match these with the characteristics of the individual.

The development of psychometric testing originates from this approach. It provides standardised measures to assist in the assessment process. It assumes that individual differences in ability and personality can be systematically related to the variations in occupational categories. It assumes also that workers in different occupations will have different psychological attributes and their adjustment to work is maximised where attributes and job demands are matched accurately. In the past decade, however, the use of measures of intelligence, aptitude and temperament in career guidance has declined and a number of studies have challenged the notion that psychometric test data can adequately predict occupational success, satisfaction and work performance.

The main premise used by those researchers and counsellors is that there exists one ideal job for each person and that people's interests and abilities do not change over time. These two factors are, the theorists maintain, most responsible for career choice and satisfaction. If special talents, levels of ability and intelligence are measured, the process is merely a matter of matching the individual with an occupation which fits.

The opposing career guidance approach places much more emphasis on counselling as a skill and on the self-search effort required of the individual and less on the 'interpret, tell and sell' practices of the other. It demands skill in enabling the person to solve their own occupational problems rather than providing the answers.

The objective is to enable people to make worklife decisions for themselves. The key difference is the view that vocational choice, adjustment and coping is seen as a lifelong process. Self-concepts change, preferences alter, and the initial choice of career is unlikely to be sustained throughout a working lifetime. Individuals may wish to initiate a change of occupation and/or nature of employment environment; or, through necessity, they may need to learn and apply techniques for career change more than once. The main emphasis is on helping people to learn how to assemble necessary data about themselves, make career decisions, establish effective work relationships and, when appropriate, be successful at attaining promotion, transfer or an alternative employer. The underlying theme is that career choice and decision making are not concerned with a single life event but with a continual process of personal change and learning.

Career development literature over the past decade has contributed to the growth of understanding of career issues within the overall fabric of a person's life, and incorporates the social and cultural context in which the person lives. There are several researchers, academics and career development practitioners who have contributed to the current level of knowledge about career choice among adults.

I have attempted to illustrate the more well-known writers and their theories in Figure 2. Also included are several other less well-known career development theories generally referred to as sociological and economic theories.

The career theories based on what can be termed a life-span perspective maintain that career choice and subsequent career progress is a social process. The nature of one's schooling, family socio-economic background, the influence of family members and close friends, and the resultant expectations a person evolves are seen as the prime determinants of occupational choice, one's level of attainment and what prompts a person to make a career change or career path realignment.

My work in worklife counselling favours the multi-career, life-span and sociological approach. Yet the career transitions my clients take do not conform to the pattern of one particular career development theory. My observation is that career actions are more likely to be prompted by unexpected events or non-events in a person's life. In fact, as much as 70 per cent of my clients initiate career review and subsequent actions leading to some form of career content change as a result of a negative setback in their worklife or in personal circumstances outside their employment environment. Only a minority initiate career review as a self-help measure and plan their career horizons when their worklife is relatively satisfactory.

Figure 2

CAREER CHOICE AND DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

TRAIT AND FACTOR
- General Trait and Factor (Darley and Patterson)
- John Holland's Typology
- Myers-Briggs Typology
- Work Adjustment Theory (L.H. Lofquist and R.V. Dawis)

LIFE-SPAN
- Donald Super's Stages of Adult Development
- L.S. Gottfredson's Theory of Career Development
- Life Stages of People of Colour (D.R. Atkinson, G. Morton and D.W. Sue)

CAREER DECISION MAKING
- Social Learning Theory (J.D. Krumboltz)
- Individualistic Perspective (D. Tiedeman and A. Miller-Tiedeman)
- Sequential Elimination Theory (I. Gati)

PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY (M.L. Savickas)

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT THEORY (A. Roe)

SOCIOLOGICAL & ECONOMIC THEORIES
- Accident Theory (several authors)
- Status Attainment Theory (several authors)
- Human Capital Theory (several authors)
- Dual Economy Theory (several authors)

Adapted from *Applying Career Development Theory to Counseling* by Richard S. Sharf (Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1992)

In many instances people need strong incentives to make major life and career decisions. Although some will walk around a swimming pool initially reluctant to jump in and experience a few moments of cold, they eventually take the plunge and enjoy the swim; others have to be pushed. Where I do find agreement with the career development theorists is that the concept of a career being continually 'upwardly mobile'—in other words, of a linear nature leading to more responsibility with each career action—is not true for the majority of people at work.

Consequently, I define a career as a sequence of work experiences, paid and unpaid, which:

- Requires an activist approach
- Incorporates your task preferences
- Has elements of well-researched risk taking
- Includes self-set goals and schedules
- Involves obtaining feedback from others
- Necessitates self-evaluated performance
- Provides psychological success
- Combines characteristics external to you with changing factors within you
- Should be a continuous adventure

A more succinct way of defining a career is as a sequence of work experiences in which one identifies a changing array of personally attractive satisfiers beyond simply earning a living.

Many believe they have no career. Having a career does not mean anything significant to them. 'I have a job,' they say. They have jobs that earn a living but contribute little more to their inner well-being and satisfaction with their way of life. Something is missing, something elusive. Hence their admission, 'Others have careers; I have a job.' They acknowledge other people can have a career, but say that they cannot. Many people have several potential careers but lack resolution on one particular career in which they can not only be competent but feel they are contributing more than just a trade of skills for pay. They are not prepared to close off some possibilities for the sake of realising others. Closing off possibilities is a prerequisite for an effective design of our life management. Others are in never-ending preparation for a career.

'My reward, feeling better about what I do, will come one day if I simply work harder and let luck play a part.'

A person who has a career has made a declaration first to self and then to others about a particular direction in their worklife—a set of purposes. They do not dream of a career—they have brought reality into their dream. It takes hard work, emotional investment and determination to work out a direction. It takes courage to search the self deeply and then decide from the options that every one of us actually has—whatever our education, socio-economic circumstances and personal constraints.

Understanding Career Development Support

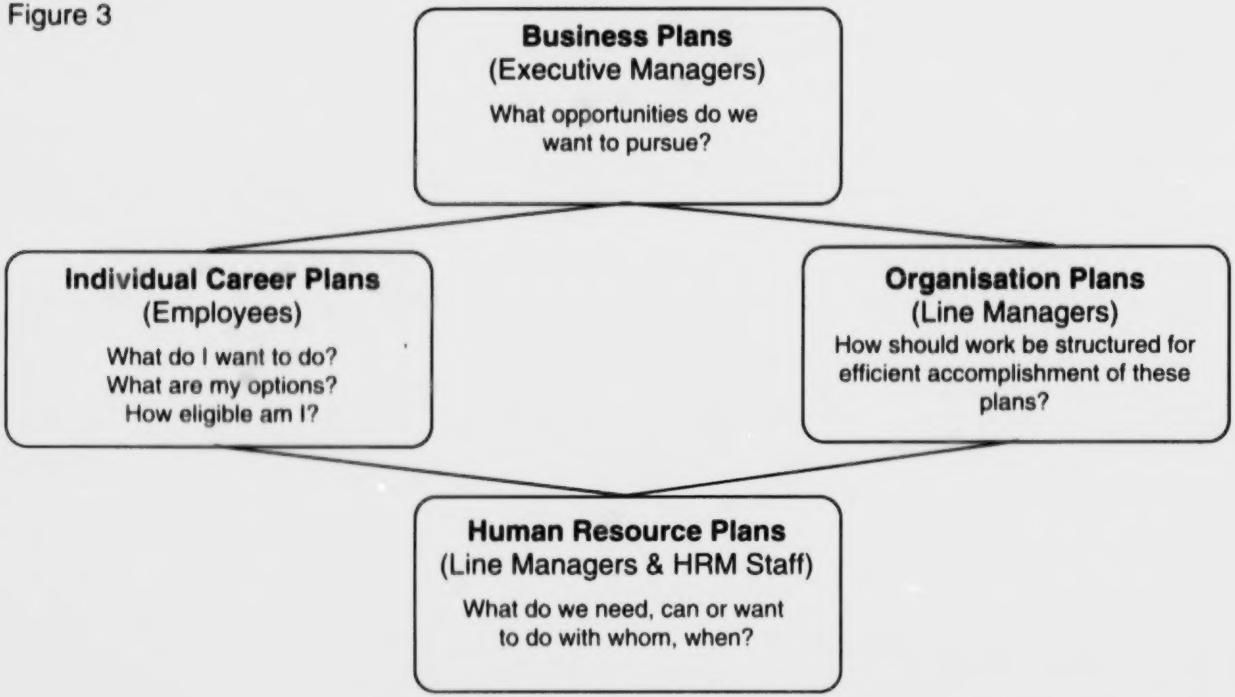
When the quest for reductions in expenditure is more intense than customary, cost cutting by reducing career development support efforts is frequently based on a misunderstanding of its purpose. Many managers fail to perceive that career development support needs to be developed as a response to particular problems in an organisation. Training-function staff who are involved in career development tuition or counselling activities are often ill-prepared, even unskilled, in defending their programs from emasculation during these periods of organisational change.

When costs are an issue, career development is too often disregarded as a methodology, and is therefore left unaddressed. In fact, a major objective of career development is to help with the organisational need for a shared problem-solving process. Rising costs, high absenteeism or staff turnover, internal friction between people, groups or departments, breakdowns in communication, resistance to change, and an inability to make changes are frequently at the root of an organisation's problems.

As with most attempts to find solutions to problems, one invariably has to analyse the causes first: not the 'apparent', not the 'imaginary', but the real problem(s). Herein lies one of the fundamental benefits of career development. That is, in its initial stage of implementation, it provides a catalyst for uncovering the real causes of problems. By 'unfettering' staff views, much can be learned about the need for improvements within the organisation.

Concern about costs and time: Wherever behaviour modification, attitudinal change and cohesive group effort are required, time, as well as the selection of the appropriate methodology, is paramount to ensuring success. Career development does not lend itself to 'quickie' solutions. It is concerned with solutions which are

Figure 3


Business Plans
(Executive Managers)
What opportunities do we want to pursue?
Individual Career Plans
(Employees)
What do I want to do?
What are my options?
How eligible am I?
Organisation Plans
(Line Managers)
How should work be structured for efficient accomplishment of these plans?
Human Resource Plans
(Line Managers & HRM Staff)
What do we need, can or want to do with whom, when?

effective and lasting. Herein lies much of the reason for resistance to career development support systems as a means to helping solve problems where an urgent resolution is sought. Success will not come about by piecemeal interventions nor patchwork, short-term corrections in human resource management procedures.

Realistic approach to outcomes: In times of change, managers need to act responsibly and promptly. One or two career development actions do not constitute effective career development support systems. In their haste to identify solutions, managers may adopt strategies which do not produce the benefits they seek. The time required to study and evaluate career development effectively does not allow for hasty review. For its potential to be realised, managers need to be realistic about the time frames for positive outcomes. Career development support interventions that are implemented without a realistic view of outcomes have the inherent danger of doing little to assist the organisation to operate in a satisfactory environment and under suitable conditions.

Our workplaces are more troubled than they have been for many years. Mergers, acquisitions, downsizing, reconstructions are now more common. In turn, this has affected both employees' views on the duration of their career horizons with current employers and the aspect of trust between management and staff. Insecurity is the widespread characteristic among employees' attitudes. The 'culture' of most organisations has changed.

Career development has the potential to help employers cope with this change, and, in turn, improve their relationships with customers and suppliers and increase the effectiveness of the employees within the organisation and its structures, systems, goals, tasks and performance. Career development does link business issues with their human resources implications. It is, in essence, a modern technique for progressing towards success once such success has been defined in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Career development is a growth area for the organisational researcher, the academic and the executive manager concerned with the search for more effective means of using human resources. This subject area is creating growing interest, concerning as it does the individual and his or her potential within the world of work.

Furthermore, career development has a close interdependence with a range of other disciplines such as organisational behaviour, psychology, human resource accounting, industrial sociology, industrial relations and economics. The boundaries are yet to be clearly defined. This can occur only when more managers take the courage to apply career development support systems to organisations and the record of experience and outcomes is accelerated. Despite its relative infancy, there is now sufficient proof that career development is not 'another of those fuzzy personnel schemes'. It is an important component of the total strategy of policies, procedures and programs essential to achieving an improvement in human productivity and motivation in the work environment. Validated career development techniques and procedures are now available for use.

Effect of career development support: A variety of results have been cited by organisations which have implemented comprehensive career development support systems and arranged for concurrent counselling services, career workshops and life-planning training to take place. Results include:

- Improved matching of jobs with people
- Higher quality of data for manpower and staff succession reviews
- Better focus for the allocation of funds for training needs
- Costs justified through the transfer of unhappy and unproductive employees to positions which suit them better
- Realistic career action and career growth plans tabled by employees at performance review discussions
- Creation, or restoration, of confidence in the regular performance review system as the subordinate and manager focus on more relevant data as a team rather than in a confrontation process
- Reduced need to recruit externally as greater capabilities of employees are revealed through career training events and/or data is obtained through comprehensive questionnaires and skill inventories
- Improved image of human resource service functions such as personnel, training, EEO, employee assistance programs and career development officers as employees experience assistance which benefits them and their employer
- Development of career transition outplacement services for those who decide that a career change outside the organisation is in their best interests

By offering career development facilities for its employees, an organisation can produce further benefits for both itself and the individual. For the organisation these can be:

- An inventory of employee skills and their current career goals is ready for company use
- Better identification of future human resource needs
- Facilitation of organisational changes by improved understanding of the 'micro' or individual level of change
- A facilitation of individual change by involving people in their own development plans
- Better anticipation of the various stages of development required for the variety of occupations and professions within an organisation
- An informed ability to deal explicitly with previously unrealised and hidden employee expectations
- Revitalisation and retraining of endangered segments of the workforce

For the individual employee, these benefits can include:

- The greater likelihood of making informed career choices
- A lessened likelihood of surprise and disappointment in one's job
- Better identification of the sequence of job skills or credentials needed to achieve various career objectives
- Clarification of previously suppressed and conflicting career goals
- Career objectives are placed in the broader mosaic of life, including the workplace, employment environment changes, personal relationships, family life and community membership

The key to successful career development practice lies in the skilful selection of career development support systems and the amount of attention management gives to career management training needs for both managers and their employees. This must be intensive and recurring and should encourage a process of self-examination and planning by each employee. It must lead to the development of realistic personal goals and action plans by employees that, in turn, benefit the employer.

Figure 4

SUMMARY OF ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS FROM CAREER SUPPORT SYSTEMS

1. Meeting Employee Concerns
   - Visible help in planning careers
   - Information about realistic opportunities
   - Teaches self-help skills and attitude
2. Revitalisation (Environment change = lower morale = cost to productivity and performance)
   - Career help appeals to self-interest
   - Organisational renewal
   - Renewed appreciation of job and employer
3. Improved HR Planning Information
   - Employees articulate well-reasoned career action step proposals
   - Personal development requests are more specific than enrolment in any course
   - Employees look beyond job titles to bring their key skills and competencies to work assignments
4. Improved Performance Management
   - Fosters regular communication
   - Separates performance review from discussions on career future
   - Managers become coaches
   - Jobs often restructured mutually

2 Career Support Systems

First Steps

The first thing an organisation should do when developing career support systems is conduct an audit to identify the needs it wants to satisfy and then develop an unambiguous strategy for implementing a program linked to those needs. Participation by relevant managers in the early stages of career development support helps allay concerns that it will overburden them, and also builds commitment to the program.

Assumptions made about career development support needs can be misleading and thus need to be backed up by data. In assessing what is needed, information should be gathered from and about employees. Sample poll their attitudes towards themselves, their career and their employer. Sample poll managers on the organisation's culture and career development philosophy and their views on the effectiveness or otherwise of career management services which already exist.

In essence, an assessment of needs comes down to such basic questions as:

- What do we want? Create a wish list of your ideal career development support services within your organisation.
- What do we already have? Because of their very nature, your human resource development programs and procedures already contain many career development support activities. List them.
- What can we realistically do? A rational approach is required when you hone your wish list to the organisation's ability or preparedness to deliver. A realistic assessment of needs and the planning of subsequent training events should prevent unrealistic expectations and reduce risk. The key to effective career development training is in developing more realistic—not raised—expectations.

Focus on productivity: Improvements in bottom-line productivity from utilising career development support systems result:

- Increasing productivity through improved fitting of jobs to people
- Discouraging competent, but currently frustrated or disillusioned, people from leaving
- Reducing 'pirating' of capable employees by competitors, as staff perceive more value in staying
- Creating opportunities to anticipate and prevent conflicts between the employees' wants and employer's needs
- Providing valid information for human resource planning and succession
- Using talent which previously remained untapped and unidentified, by extending awareness of skills and competencies of employees

Your selection of career development support systems should be guided by seeking such outcomes as:

- Help for employees to conduct their own career planning, which prompts the raising of questions that need to be answered and provides information on available opportunities and resources
- Enhancing the value of employees taking considered risks to improve performance in their current job
- Guiding employees to take considered advantage of organisational services available for career development, such as job task exchanges, job transfers or job rotations, consultative performance reviews, training and education assistance programs
- Contributing to job re-design that makes the employee's current job more meaningful and significant to them
- Increasing employee confidence in the organisation's career support services

Implementing career development help: It is important to identify the resources necessary to implement the program, and having done so, to select and develop them further. Existing personnel

Figure 5

IMPETUS FOR EMPLOYER CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

- Increasing staff productivity
- Decreasing attrition
- Organisation change—culture and/or structure
- Response to EEO laws
- Promotion from within rather than external recruitment
- Requests from employees
- Arresting dysfunctional behaviour

practices such as job-posting bulletins, transfer and promotion procedures, performance reviews and technical skills training should be audited and any shortcomings corrected. A fundamental requirement for planning effective programs of support is to communicate what current and emerging career development resources are available to interested employees. Such resources may include, for example, consultants, career planning materials (both reference texts and self-administered workbooks) and career-related software for computer-aided career development activities.

All supervisors and managers should be informed about the program and what it entails before it is introduced to employees, so that they can ask questions and clarify procedures. The program should subsequently be communicated widely, so that all employees know that it exists and also know what the terms are for eligibility for their participation and what is actually involved.

Targeting Career Development Efforts

An organisation should be selective in its targeting of career development support. It is not realistic to launch a program of activities with ambitions that all those in the organisation's employ will subsequently be energised to contribute more to the employer's objectives.

The allocation of employer's funds for career development support needs to be targeted at areas where there are real problems and considerable impediments to efficiency and profitability. The focusing of early efforts on those requesting them is not always the best approach. Satisfactory returns on funds invested can best be realised when such efforts are initially directed at those who are potential work enthusiasts but show signs that they need good reasons for enhancing their individual work performance and, in turn, their careers.

After directing efforts at the potential work enthusiasts, the employees who are obviously career minded and ambitious should not be neglected.

Those employees who indicate that they are only working in anticipation of retiring should not have such resources devoted to them, as this would be the least valuable allocation of career development support funds. In all organisations there are employees who should be terminated. The funds for career transition support are better allocated in such instances to external third party counsellors and/or skilled 'outplacement' helpers so that internal staff can apply their energies in career support to those remaining in the organisation's employ.

Realistic expectations: Organisations that have been successful in their career development support efforts have guided employees toward opportunities that are actually available. They have tried to dispel the 'up or out' view of a career and instead promote other options such as lateral career moves and careers within specialised job areas or locations. An employee need not feel it necessary to be promoted to get ahead. And employees need not change jobs or employers to achieve career progress. If career planning focuses on personal development in the current job rather than on potential for promotion and career mobility, it can help create more realistic career expectations and help minimise dissatisfaction.

Figure 6

ORGANISATIONAL FOCUS FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

- Damage control mode
- Restore morale of survivors of downsizing
- Accommodate flatter structures
- Third age careers, i.e. those over 40 years of age
- Conduct needs analyses
- Focus on plateaued staff
- Focus on females
- Focus on minority groups

Life skills: In order to assist employees to cope better in their work and in an environment of rapid change, they need to be given life skills training. Staff development resources could be better spent by many employers on such life skills topics as appropriate assertiveness, negotiation and conflict resolution, the nature of differences between individuals and body language interpretation. It is interesting to note that when there is no in-company training in these interpersonal communication techniques, the public access seminars and workshops conducted by training consultants are extremely well attended. They would not be so successful if there were not a market need. Specifically, life skills training is needed in such areas as the nature and causes of conflict; how to concentrate on building your own power rather than competing with other's power; and learning how to say 'no' without multiplying your 'enemies'.

Where employees are not given the opportunity to learn career protection strategies and build life skills, this could jeopardise their sense of well-being and prevent them from feeling more in charge of their own careers. Many careers flounder and career setbacks occur because individuals are not skilled at building support for themselves or are not encouraged to believe this learning effort is necessary.

There are other motivations for teaching life skills and coping techniques. The prevalent impression about work future in the year 2020 is a very gloomy one. The severity and length of time of the recession most countries are experiencing has precipitated a crisis of confidence and raised questions of personal identity for many. Expectations of job quality have declined proportionally with job availability. High unemployment has reduced countries' national output which, in turn, has reflected on declining motivations. Labour force conditions are deterring people who are dissatisfied with current job from resigning their current employ to seek 'greener pastures' within another. Pessimism about present and future work abounds. To remain in unsatisfying work has the danger of leading to less committed workforces and less output.

In these conditions, employees need help to realise that not all is doom and gloom, that, by learning how to cope with this radical change, the can gain a form of empowerment that will help them to overcome such concerns. It is possible to achieve renewed vigour for work and living. Skilled helpers are required to help employees rearrange their complex lives and plan for a more coherent future. A career development support person, or trained mentor, can help employees design a self-renewing life and a career within it. They can coach and guide employees through these transitions that do not appear to be working satisfactorily for them. They can help by explaining about life stages, about transformational experiences, about the value of life-span learning, to help employees make more sense out of their lives using developmental and human system skills. To lift the spirit of the workforce in this way must inevitably benefit employers.

The career plateau: Reaching a career plateau can cause debilitating stress among employees. This is more frequent for those whose self-esteem is abnormally dependent on their activities at work and/or who have experienced rapid promotions. They can feel that life as a whole, and not just their career, has lost its stimulation.

A sad feature of career plateau is that employers rarely take any action to help. Their attention is usually focused on those who appear to be worthy of promotion rather than on staff whose careers have plateaued.

There are two types of career plateau. The first, where a person is unlikely to be promoted, is termed 'structural plateau'. While the job content may change there will be only small increases in status, pay and responsibility. The other type is termed a 'content plateau'. This means that the work content of a job is unlikely to change to any significant degree. Not only is there little likelihood of promotion, there is little possibility that the tasks of the current job will alter.

Some people have invested a lot of psychological energy towards achieving work success. When a plateau occurs, the employer should counsel them with sensitivity in order to restore vigour and interest in completing current tasks well. Information and feedback should be given to help reduce negative feelings and career uncertainty. Staff whose careers have plateaued need to be helped to redefine their ambitions.

This often painful subject must be taken out of the closet so that good people are not lost to the employer. Ways should be identified which make best use of the experience and expertise of those who are unlikely to obtain further promotion in the organisational hierarchy. Efforts should be made to determine what job task alternatives exist or can be created.

There are various methods employers can use:

- Lateral transfers
- Short-term assignments to projects
- Altering jobs so that the tasks involve a combination of old and new responsibilities

- Inviting career-plateaued staff to become mentors to younger staff and new recruits

These techniques are excellent for revitalising attitudes and work performance when a career has plateaued.

Older but not obsolete: Where career support programs exist, they usually focus on the needs of individuals who are getting established: the young 'up and coming' high potential employees. While this attention is worthwhile, additional actions are required to attend to the needs of those who are middle aged or older. If they are not given help in coping with their career planning needs, many good performers may be lost. Some may leave; others may simply 'retire on the job' as a result of career frustrations at this stage of their lives. While the 'cream may rise to the top', many employees with considerable talent may be overlooked or left behind, or may leave through neglect ('voting with their feet') unless a comprehensive program is undertaken and monitored.

Figure 7

GUIDELINES ON GETTING RESULTS FROM ORGANISATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Use a blend of career assessment instruments and data-gathering techniques to target specifically felt needs. Set specific objectives and evaluation criteria. Talk business, not career development
- Spend time to determine the cultural assumptions of the organisation
- Obtain top management sponsorship by being acutely aware of political processes and motives
- Examine power and decision-making processes and develop strategies to influence key players
- Determine a linkage between career development and the business plan
- Define the role, benefits and costs of career development. Don't hide elephants!
- Examine the consistency between your career development process and human resource systems (i.e. selection, performance appraisal, rewards and development)

- Highlight the responsibilities of the organisation, the manager, the employee and the career development function to the success of the process. Minimise dependency and maximise commitment!
- Use a wide range of development methods
- Maintain your energy level for the process of reviewing your strategies. Ensure you have an adequate intellectual and emotional support mechanism
- Start with a small pilot trial and revise your strategies for the longer term. Be continuously aware of the changing variables affecting your outcomes
- Rigorously market success by rewarding key players for their positive contribution
- Allocate time to refine your understanding and application of key career development concepts

Contributed by: Excel Human Resource Development
(A Sydney based Career Systems Consultancy)

Employees' Concerns

The kinds of assistance employees seek from career development support are diverse. Some concerns for which answers or support are likely to be sought are:

- Help with life planning concerns
- Need for career information
- What the employer expects of them
- Determining appropriate type of career path in relation to training and work experience
- Determining appropriate type of career path in relation to interests, values, skills and personality
- Learning more about their skills and capabilities
- Preparing for next career review discussion with manager
- Changing career path
- Long-range occupational planning

- Help in changing to a part-time job or job-sharing arrangement
- Obtaining a transfer locally, interstate or overseas
- Résumé counselling
- Disbelief that work can be a source of satisfaction
- Apprehension about change
- Job application counselling (promotion, transfer, re-employment)
- Interview training (one-to-one and selection panels)
- Decision-making counselling
- Help with further education course selection
- Help with mature-age education entry applications
- How to write a career plan document
- Fear of trying to predict the future

Need for a Model

Those planning career development support need a career management model—an overall concept of the process of self-learning and the journey to resolving career confusions and concerns—in order to decide the content of career development. Adult career development theorists such as Super, Schlossberg, Roe, Bordin, Ginsberg, Tiedeman, Krumboltz, Otte, Schein, Crystal and others should be researched to gain a thorough understanding of the models they put forward.

I have devised a model to help individuals and, in turn, employers, with this work. This Model of Career Development is shown in Figure 8. Applying this model and the Employers' Support Services Guide, Figure 9, can assist when designing help for employees wishing to audit their career situation or identify new directions.

Explanations and a rationale for my Model are contained in my publication, *A Passion For Work: Our Lifelong Affair* (published by Worklife in 1993).

Figure 8

STEVENS' MODEL OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Stage One: Self-Assessment

Clarifying issues and concerns — Assembling an information base through structured analysis — Reviewing current job effectiveness — Checking employment experiences — Abilities — Interests — Values — Primary wants — Employment environment preferences — Lifestyle considerations

⇓

Stage Two: Interpreting Data

Analysis — Identification of transferable skills — Career requirements developed — Resolving ambiguities — Lifestyle integration — Monetary needs and considerations — Barriers to success — Identifying perceived and real constraints

⇓

Stage Three: Opportunity Awareness

Collecting appropriate information — Research gathering information on organisation— Reality testing — Cultivating a network — Benefiting from mentoring — Evaluating results — Selection of career action options

⇓

Stage Four: Decision Learning

Evaluating career action options — Trade-offs — Deciding on goals — Career transition scheduling

⇓

Stage Five: Transition Training

Rehearsing for negotiations — Documenting short- and long-term goals — Developing strategies for success — Checking career action preparation — Preparing requests for approval — Auditing career transition progress

⇓

Stage Six: Transition Accomplished

Review of completed career action steps — Assessment of well-being

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Figure 9

EMPLOYERS' SUPPORT SERVICES GUIDE

As an employee proceeds to resolve their own career action plan and implement it, the employer provides the person with the following support at each stage:

Stage One: Self-Assessment

Provide resources for self-understanding — Self-help workbooks —Assessment instruments — Diagnostic aids — Career planning workshop

⇓

Stage Two: Interpreting Data

Provide forum for confidential discussion — Counsellor help — Check for realistic appraisal of potential — Input data into employee skill inventory

⇓

Stage Three: Opportunity Awareness

Link person with appropriate resources and people — Provide career information resources centre — Career path and mobility options — Provide job content skill/competency definitions — Job vacancy, job rotation, secondment opportunity bulletins

⇓

Stage Four: Decision Learning

Training in decision-making methods — Communication of realities of options — Provision of mentor assistance — Access to third party external counsellor — Documentation of career action resolution

⇓

Stage Five: Transition Training

Provide support to realise goal acceptable to organisation and employee — Career coaching from manager — Analysis of development needs — Skill gap assessment — Interview training — Résumé writing help

⇓

Stage Six: Transition Accomplished

Follow up by HRM staff on outcomes, i.e. benefits for employer, benefits for employee — Schedule career progress review — Reinforce manager's role in career support

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Resources for Organisations

Career development consultants: A growing number of people have chosen career development as an area in which to specialise as consultants. Many are former personnel managers or staff development trainers. Others come from production and marketing disciplines. Several have formed the Career Development and Skills Formation Network within the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) and meet regularly to share experiences and research about their work with both organisations and individuals. Various academic institutions are including career development within their syllabuses for postgraduate and Masters study programs. Organisations interested in locating consultants with whom to work on career development support systems can contact either AHRI or the business or commerce faculty of their local tertiary education institution.

Career development consultants use a combination of organisational development and personnel management specialities. Their role has a dual orientation. First, to be knowledgeable and practised in the use of a range of activities and resources which an employer may use to help their employees set and achieve their career objectives. Second, to ensure that in the process of implementing these forms of assistance, the organisation meets its need to recruit, develop and move its employees according to its own short- and long-term human resource needs. Limiting attention only to what the employees want or to what the organisation wants is not a recipe for effective career development advice and practice.

The selection of an appropriate career development consultant is critical to the successful appraisal and modification of an organisation's operations. As it is very much a social system, the organisation's members can impede or assist the external consultant's effectiveness. As a business operation, an organisation is a complex entity with many facets, which are shaped by attitudes, culture and interconnecting procedures—many not formalised in printed form. An 'outsider' needs to learn and comprehend this complexity, often within a short time frame, in order to be able to advise, guide and monitor progress of the career development effort. As organisations operate within an environment of constant change, the consultant's awareness of, and appreciation of, interfacing events in the industry, community and nation in which it functions is important. All these produce a formidable challenge in the selection of a career development consultant. It places considerable responsibility on the person making the selection.

A further difficulty exists. Because career development is a relatively new form of management science, the record of past example is not wide. This can make it difficult to identify an appropriate consultant, because few are actually trained and fewer still are experienced in the various strategies and actions associated with this process. References to past successful examples are often rare and difficult to obtain.

Despite these hazards, the same problem-analysis approach taken to other business problems should be applied. First, the apparent problem that needs to be resolved should be identified and serious consideration given to whether its real cause is another underlying problem. The nature of the problem(s) should dictate the criteria upon which the search, identification and selection of the consultant is based. This approach is important, even though it may be expected that the consultant would investigate what problems need to be addressed. If this preliminary diagnosis and a formulation of a conclusion is avoided, this could lead to costly errors.

The behavioural style and verbal skills of the consultant need to be appraised. Knowledge of techniques alone will not ensure success. Theoretical study in career development cannot be a substitute for a pragmatic outlook, business acumen and sensitivity to human relationship issues. Evidence that the proposed consultant has these qualities should be sought.

When the selection process is complete, the terms of the engagement should be specified in writing and a written acknowledgement of their acceptance by the consultant secured. Establishing the terms of the engagement in detail is as much for the protection of the consultant's reputation as for the organisation in which the career development activity is to take place. Consulting engagements in general have a poor history of misunderstanding between the two parties when such terms have not been established and agreed to in writing. The measurement methods and reporting lines/procedures for monitoring and assessing results would be a key element in such an agreement.

Aspects such as defining the objectives, agreeing on the methods, determining the timetable are all necessary to ensuring the organisation receives value for money. The very nature of career development interventions can make measurement difficult; culture and attitudes usually feature in the career consulting process and their effects are hard to quantify precisely. Hence, an informal and frank exchange of views should be occurring between the employer and the consultant throughout the engagement.

Figure 10

CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT
TRAINING AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS

- Career analysis methods
- Recognition of skills and capabilities
- Career management procedures
- Career counselling
- Goal setting
- Worklife issues
- Conflict resolution
- Design of careers program
- Managers' role in career coaching
- Self-help resources
- Personal needs analysis
- Reality testing
- Life planning

Career Development Support Techniques

Employers who are initiating or enhancing career support for employees need to give emphasis to worklife planning, self-analysis methodology and career targeting, rather than simply to training in promotion and job-seeking techniques. The primary benefit from this emphasis is that rather than those employees who participate expecting that the employer will provide all their career development, the individual accepts specific responsibilities to initiate the career content change they desire. The employers' support role can take many forms. They are described in the following pages.

Techniques for assisting employees include surveys, counselling, workshops, workbooks and career information resources. Counselling may be provided by managers, or by counsellors engaged from sources outside the organisation. Self-help materials include workbooks and reading materials, whether designed specifically for the firm or published for general use. Such career planning workbooks provide self-directed exercises on self-analysis, career planning and career goal setting.

The inherent nature of management involves making choices once a policy has been determined and options researched. Career development is no different. While an ambitious program may include all of the support systems mentioned in Figure 11, an organisation may choose to select one or more for its program.

Figure 11

CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

SELF-ASSESSMENT AIDS

- Career planning workshops
- Self-help workbooks
- Pre-retirement seminars
- Diagnostic aids (career assessment instruments)

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING

- Line managers and supervisors
- Internal human resource staff
- External worklife counsellors
- Outplacement skilled helpers

INTERNAL INFORMATION

- Job posting bulletins
- Job skill requirements databank
- Career information resource centre

ORGANISATIONAL PROCESSES

- Employee skill inventories
- Employees' career path planning data
- Replacement and succession planning
- Assessment of skill gaps
- Diagnostic testing
- Job rotation programs
- Mentoring systems
- Supervisors' career coaching training
- Individual career progress review discussions

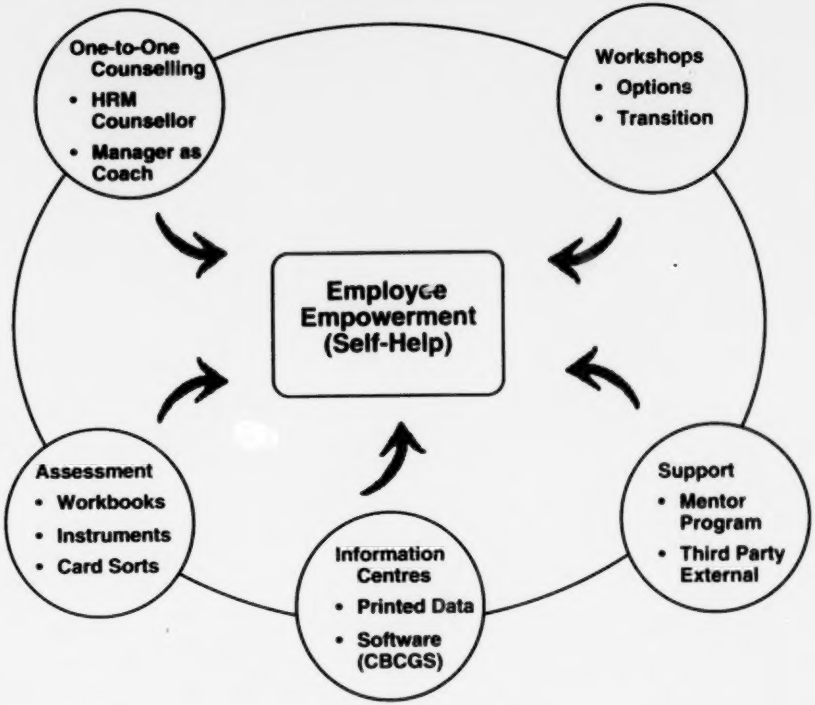
Surveys: The degree of interest employees have in career management and the quality of their awareness can be ascertained by a survey. The selection and compilation of questions to be included in a survey will depend upon the motives for seeking the data. The motive may be an assessment of what career development support systems are needed; the state of morale; the attitudes towards existing career development support; or opinions on career futures. The design of responses is also important and choices will need to be made from Yes/No forced choice answers, the Likert five degrees of choice method, and/or opportunities for 'free-form' responses. Other considerations in the design of surveys include: should the survey respondents be anonymous, be required to record their name, or offered the option?

Many surveys reduce their potential for positive outcomes by delays in publishing the results for all respondents to read—or failing to publish them at all! Having invested time in obtaining survey results, you need to communicate the results and compile a list of required actions, plus set a timetable for their implementation.

*When developing **life plans** the employee draws primarily from structured introspection. When preparing **career development plans** and **job performance plans**, the individual needs to rely on help from their manager.*

Workshops as support systems: When workshops are offered during scheduled working hours, this demonstrates the validity of the employer's intent to facilitate employees' career development. Such events are useful for communicating and clarifying the employer's objectives. Common issues can be addressed at one time. The interaction among employees, appropriately led by an experienced trainer, increases the likelihood of learning tasks being completed. Participants can help each other by recalling, organising and interpreting information. Each participant can test out their developing options and proposed strategies for implementation with fellow participants and receive useful responses. In the process, each participant creates a support network which may assist them in implementing career decisions. Subject to an appropriate environment being provided, the self-exploration and skills assessment can be carried out without interruption.

Figure 12


One-to-One Counselling
• HRM Counsellor
• Manager as Coach
Workshops
• Options
• Transition
Employee Empowerment (Self-Help)
Assessment
• Workbooks
• Instruments
• Card Sorts
Information Centres
• Printed Data
• Software (CBCGS)
Support
• Mentor Program
• Third Party External

A well-structured workshop increases career awareness and encourages participants of all ages to:

- Assess their interests, abilities and circumstances
- Set personal development goals and plans
- Consider their options
- Make decisions relating to their current job
- Establish personal development plans that are likely to bring the results they deserve through their efforts

The logistics and costs of any training event are factors which often deter management from in-company workshops or those conducted at off-company sites. A further problem is that critical choices and judgements often cannot be made by individuals within a prescribed time frame or one concentrated session. The nature of career review requires a different span of time for one person compared to another.

Some important career action skills such as research interviews cannot be developed within a training room. They need to be practised in 'real-life' settings. So participants need to be encouraged to carry out 'reality' testing and other assignments between training sessions or at the conclusion of the workshop.

Participants are not all at the same stage of career maturity, nor grappling with identical career-related problems at the same time. The employer's response to a declared need may be slower than in a more focused one-to-one counselling situation. A skilled trainer is required for workshops to ensure individual differences and needs are accommodated. Equally, participants are not necessarily ready or willing to address the same things at the same time or share their information in front of others.

These are formidable problems, but are common to most training situations conducted within a workshop setting. The selection of the trainer and/or trainer's assistants is a critical factor in overcoming these disadvantages.

Publications: Books that aid individuals in their personal career management are being both published locally and imported in increasing numbers. Their aim is to assist readers to learn from their worklife experiences and guide them in how to use the new knowledge and insights they have gained to develop career plans and strategies. The methods described in these publications assist readers to develop three critical skills—observation, analysis and scheduling. They demand action from readers by requiring a structured analysis of experiences that is both comprehensive and systematic and is usually done in written form over a period of time.

Much of the literature available from government sources and, indeed, from local publishers in the private sector is directed at the needs of the teenager. This ignores the multitude of people of mature age who could benefit from workbooks, interest inventories, career change guidance, retraining data, etc. Tuition materials and self-assessment aids are most useful in assisting employees to become competent in managing their own careers.

Workbooks as support systems: Many publications of this nature are imported. Care must be taken to check 'cultural' aspects of style and vocabulary and to avoid semantic problems with the text. The book should be designed so that it does not focus disproportionately on the negative aspects of employment. The structure of the learning process needs to be evaluated to ensure that it conforms to what is desired and fulfils the organisation's purpose in providing workbooks to staff. Workbooks, by definition, require the user to apply personal effort. If too much text is contained within a workbook, the user may treat it as a text for learning by reading only, rather than as a learning-by-doing procedure.

Workbooks do emphasise learning through self-initiated exploration and discovery. Users can select the sections that are more pertinent to their current concerns. Used as assigned homework between training sessions, workbooks assist the continuity of learning and involve staff in helping themselves. Some questions and structured analyses require users to respond to aspects about their careers and non-work life which they may prefer to analyse privately and reflect upon before responding. Workbooks facilitate this.

A workbook helps a manager or trainer to monitor employees' progress towards the resolution of their issues. The completion of a workbook shows evidence of the employee's commitment to self-help. However, the personal nature of responses within career development workbooks can cause resistance among users who may not be prepared to record data about themselves, even though assurances about personal privacy may have been given.

Thoroughly researched, tested and pleasantly designed workbooks save an organisation the effort required to design and produce their own. Evaluation of commercially available designs should be made.

Career counselling support: Many employees lack the skills to do life planning without assistance. Few do life planning except in times of personal crisis. When a person loses a job, retires, becomes ill, is divorced or loses a loved one, life planning issues become crucial and urgent. Individuals are propelled into self-evaluation, but few have a firm enough base of self-understanding or emotional composure to manage the stress and mental confusion on their own. Also they do not always have adequate assistance from their managers to do effective development or performance planning. By receiving counselling support, individuals are able to reach considered conclusions about their work and development needs.

In the organisation which believes in the value of counselling and has developed a policy and procedure that is well-known to staff, the employee will feel safe enough to seek counselling. The key factors are the climate of the workplace, the personality strengths of the managers, employer's policy and the competency of those staff involved in counselling to deal with an employee's problems. Work-based counselling has the potential to contribute to organisational goals. Inherent in this, however, is the danger that only the needs of the employer are served. Essentially, counselling should be seen as a forum for individuals: a facility whereby they can express their apprehensions and emotions, while being assisted to manage their own career futures.

Counselling is a more personalised way of providing career support, yet its success requires the cooperation of the employee. The counsellor can adapt more readily to the individual than in a workshop environment. Confidentiality can be ensured. Rarely can assistance be provided in one consultation, however. Hence, counselling often requires a series of helping encounters when the timetables of both the counsellor and client need to be coordinated.

A concerned counsellor can contribute to immense changes in the life of a troubled employee. The counsellor's knowledge and skills are key factors. Poor counselling can do more harm than good. It takes years of practice for most people to be really effective at the art. Management ability and counselling skill are two different things. In fact, counselling involves a high degree of artistry and creative people can find their involvement in the role quite stimulating. It demands an understanding of the nuances of the human personality and knowledge acquired through personal experiences of the factors affecting careers within organisations, which are not normally cited in textbooks.

Career information resources: For career planning by employees to be effective, they should be able to access information about job requirements and career paths, remuneration opportunities and available resources for personal development. It is also important that employees learn about the organisation's business—what it is doing and why, its plans and objectives—and the future career opportunities this presents.

A career information resource centre can be established providing:

- Audio-cassette programs
- Reading materials
- Career support software
- Information on career paths and skill requirements for individual positions
- Self-assessment aids to identify skills, abilities and aptitudes

Helping staff: The career problems of staff members can either be raised by the staff members themselves or managers may decide that they need to be resolved. In both situations, it is wise for the manager to plan a structured approach to the discussion. The purpose of the interview is to demonstrate willingness to help and bring about outcomes that will benefit both the individual and the employer.

Figure 13

MANAGERIAL COUNSELLING SUPPORT

Roles	**Behaviours**
Coach	Process Control
Appraiser	Listening
Adviser	Feedback
Referral Agent	Goal Setting
Information Provider	Planning

To achieve this, it is useful to conduct the interview in four parts. Firstly, the manager needs to develop a rapport and feelings of empathy with the staff member, so that relevant data can be shared in an uninhibited manner. A situation where the discussion will be interrupted or observed by other people should be avoided.

The next part is to lead the discussion into an exploration phase. This should cover the dimensions of the issue and the implications for the individual's career. Here, listening and questioning skills will be in demand.

The third part is to understand what is being learnt and to interpret accurately what really is being said and implied.

This kind of helping interview is termed career coaching and concludes with the fourth part of the process, where the manager and staff member design an action plan together, using a team problem-solving approach. Essentially, the manager needs to secure commitment to the plan and agreement about what needs to be accomplished next. This may require breaking the plan down into reasonable steps and scheduling times for their completion. It is also important to agree upon a timetable for reviewing the plan.

Figure 14

A PERSON'S THOUGHTS AFTER BEING COUNSELLED

The total loss of confidence, the feelings of devastation and inadequacy are ones which I will never forget. Things had been building up over some months, but I realised that something had to be done to escape the nightmare when I found myself starting to check the insurance policies! So I resigned, or at least I walked out in a terrible state, fully intending to come back and clear my desk as soon as I could face it.

I couldn't understand why this was happening to me. I had always thrived on a degree of insecurity—the feeling that I had to strive to do better. I had certainly been through, and handled, highly stressful situations—including strikes, setting up new organisations, moving house. However, underneath I had always been confident, although I would rarely admit it.

I was extremely lucky that my company were not prepared to accept the situation as it stood. They arranged for me to attend a counselling session.

The only word I can use to describe the first session was 'surreal'. Everything seemed strange—I wasn't sure why I was there and I nearly walked out at least twice. It was only during the second session that it began to make some sense, although I suspect that the whole process will never make total sense to me.

The question is, 'Does counselling work?' I am back in my old job, I have better relationships with my family, I see the world in a much wider sense. I notice and respond to more of what is going on around me—beauty, colour, other people's feelings are all more important to me. I understand my drives, and I hope that I am a 'better' person.

The time I spent away from the job was clearly an important factor, as was the strength of my family, which was marvellous. I had always been the strong one and I thought I had let them down. These were very powerful influences, but I now recognise the skill of the counsellor in probing, picking up minor points and helping me to recognise why the situation arose, and what I was capable of. Above all, it helped me to appreciate that I could become a much fuller person. In the past, everything had been task-orientated, and success had only been measured in terms of achievement.

Given the circumstances which were clearly wrong at work, it was inevitable that something was going to happen, and it did. Without counselling I may well have eventually returned to my job, but I am absolutely certain that with counselling I was able to return earlier, and face the first few difficult days more evenly. Above all else, my life is now much fuller, and I and my family are much happier.

When People Have to Go

De-recruitment, downsizing, 'middlectomy', employee divestment and redeployment are new members of the managerial vocabulary used as synonyms for redundancy or retrenchment. As market need to undertake such procedures increases so, too, does the service sector respond—with some alacrity. The service provided in this context is termed outplacement. The tone of this term bothers me. I have chosen to call my services relating to the career transition of terminating employees 'resettlement services'.

In a commentary about structural change within the New South Wales Public Sector in 1989 the editor of the magazine, *Directions In Government*, contributed the following succinct expression: "Management tools in this age of change have been joined by the guillotine of revolution." The writer's concern focused on the morale considerations of redundancy, whether it be voluntary or involuntary. "Such workers will be suffering a range of human reactions common to people who have gone through the traumatic shock of sudden loss, or who face a diagnosis of terminal illness. For people involved and identified with these organisations, closure is similar to the experiences of living through the death of a close friend. At first, people will deny what is happening. They will shut out the reality and isolate themselves. Then will come anger. Next, they will try to bargain, and then finally will come acceptance and hope for the changed future and choices that lie ahead. The costs to the individual are loss of identity, companionship of workmates, friendship patterns and familiar routines and comfort zones."

For twelve years I have assisted such people and can confirm that the editor is not exaggerating or labouring the emotional message. In more recent years many organisations have been acknowledging this and engaging skilled help for the career transition.

Skilled help can be applied to reduce the likelihood of experiences such as those that were related to me by a client recently:

> Along with 50 others I was retrenched. I handled the experience badly, as I was unemployed for several months and very insecure. I think my experience had a negative influence beyond what it should have. I felt "What is the use of making plans when we are 'pawns'?" I don't think that now . . .

Career support funded by the employer for terminating staff protects the image of the organisation, both externally and internally. Policy and cost sometimes preclude providing an employee who has 'to go' with outplacement help through a third party consultancy. An alternative is to purchase and donate career transition support material to affected individuals, selecting material that will help them to review their next step, and prepare and implement alternative job search strategies. Many of these individuals are job seeking for only the second time in their lives.

Resettlement (outplacement) services: The desirable contents of a resettlement service for terminating employees should be:

- Re-evaluation of career direction
- Evaluation of employment options
- Up-to-date realistic information on re-employment prospects, recruitment practices and procedures

Figure 15

WORKLIFE™

The Centre for Worklife Counselling

RESETTLEMENT SERVICES

Our code of conduct for providing career transition counselling for terminating employees includes the following:

We:

- Offer career transition counselling services as a serious professional specialty, emphasising quality
- Accept only those assignments which we have the proficiency to service
- Respect clients receiving the service
- Maintain broad experience and competence in order to advise with authority
- Commit to client's goals and develop discipline to stay with the client until the alternative job search campaign is concluded
- Treat confidential information as confidential information

- Material and information resources available for the person who wants to become self-employed
- Research assistance to identify organisations and people who the job seeker can approach, and guidance on how to carry this out
- Design of a self-marketing strategy to alternative employers
- Guidance in preparing interview-winning job application letters
- Help in designing and writing effective résumés
- Training on how to perform at selection interviews (rehearsal and personal improvement guidance) including tuition in 'body language'

- Extended knowledge of job-seeking techniques other than just responding to recruitment advertisements
- A counsellor, who can provide a cathartic outlet for feelings of strong emotion, frustration, despair and low self-esteem and helps the individual regain self-confidence
- Pragmatic review of personal financial assets, liabilities and cash flow, and the development of a workable budget for the likely career transition period
- Provision of advice, either from the counsellor or a sub-contracted specialist, concerning allocation of termination pay to optimise personal funds; in particular, information about the choices, entry fees, administration charges, withdrawal penalties and commissions associated with 'roll-over' funds
- Stress management training where appropriate
- New knowledge and skills which can be used again by the individual alone if employment loss recurs
- Emotional support and companionship so that the individual is not job searching alone and unaided
- Client confidentiality of personal data is vigorously maintained

Morale retention: One area neglected by many organisations undergoing downsizing is the implementation of concurrent career development support strategies for those employees who remain on, and are expected to keep the organisation functioning efficiently. The employer, in fact, is dependant on them doing so. The morale of those staying is as important as those terminating. Remaining employees are often left feeling defensive, wary and worried and consider their career development aspirations to be threatened.

Managing the process of downsizing: In facing the problem of having to downsize, the following are important guidelines that should be taken into consideration in order to make the process as smooth as possible:

1 Use thoroughly planned strategic objectives to develop criteria for deciding who stays and who is vulnerable. Make line managers responsible for the final decision on

terminations This builds accountability and acceptance for the need to implement changes.

2 Communicate the real facts. Rebut rumours by encouraging candid communication up and down the organisational structure. Manage the information flow by being honest, timely, thorough and accurate.

3 Justify the need for change. Help employees understand the organisation's situation. Keep employees informed of redeployment plans and the support services which will be provided. If you are to reorganise, let staff know as soon as possible how, when and to whom it will apply.

4 Respect employee dignity. Give adequate notice so that people can make plans and adjust to the idea of downsizing. Avoid firing on Fridays. Early retirement, voluntary separation schemes and other incentives may produce the necessary staff reductions.

5 Rehearse line managers and supervisors on how to answer questions and deal with employees in a fair and unbiased manner and on how to conduct the termination interview.

6 Hire a professional outplacement firm to help displaced staff; 'survivors' find knowledge of this action comforting, too. Outplacement helps to demonstrate the employer's concern and provides counselling for all terminated employees.

7 Encourage survivors to mark the leaving of co-workers with retirement dinners, farewell luncheons and so on. Attend, yourself, as many as possible. Don't hide!

8 Develop and emphasise new missions of the organisation. Increase the degree of employee participation (suggestions, project review teams, etc) in the morale rebuilding process. Involve employees in identifying problems, developing goals and designing action plans. Seek to give everyone a sense of ownership in the new organisational situation.

9 Be sensitive to the needs of remaining employees. They are bound to mourn the loss of friends, colleagues and 'the way things were'. Provide workshops led by a skilled trainer to

help those who are staying deal with guilt, insecurity, stress and anger.

10 Provide workshops in career planning and worklife decision making for those remaining, or one-to-one counselling facilities, to reinforce the value of staying rather than resigning in haste.

11 Reduce the overall workload when the workforce is reduced. Have employees concentrate on business that must be done.

12 Communicate a clear description of criteria for performance measurement methods and reward positive contributions.

13 Re-define and communicate to staff the 'psychological contract' (what the employees need, what the organisation needs, what each will give to meet the other's needs).

14 Train your managers. They will need to know how to fulfil their responsibilities with fewer resources. Leadership and delegation skills become more important than ever.

15 Learn about the legal aspects of downsizing. Inappropriately handled terminations may result in lawsuits.

Choosing skilled outplacement help: The task of a skilled helper is to help the individual come to terms with their feelings, review their total life situation, recognise their personal strengths and identify transferable skills. In addition, the skilled helper assists the person to use these facts and understandings to decide their future worklife direction. Concurrently, it is necessary to maintain the motivation of the person. The criteria in selecting an appropriate organisation to help in this process should be the nature and credentials of the skilled helper who is to be assigned to the process, not the selection of an organisation by its repute alone. The working environment of the skilled helper should be one which puts more emphasis on the professional aspects of helping, rather than commercial ones, which provides flexible services, not fixed 'helping packages', and has a record of sensitivity and effectiveness in this nature of work.

Figure 16

EVALUATING AN OUTPLACEMENT SERVICE

- How long has it been established?
- Does it put emphasis on the aspects of helping or on commercial image?
- What is the assessment of the integrity of the counselling (not marketing) staff?
- Are the services offered flexible, or a 'fixed package'?
- Does the service provide help towards self-employment?
- Does the service channel clients back into re-employment in the same career path, or consider what is the best direction for the individual?
- Does the service write résumés or train clients to prepare their own?
- What do past clients say about them?

The downside of downsizing: The reduction of the number of employees through redundancies has a significant affect on the career aspirations, and often the behaviour, of those remaining on. Managers, in particular, often find themselves working in new, and not necessarily friendly, environments. They are often stretched thin, they manage more people and jobs, and they work longer hours. Many are not willing or able to work under these changed conditions. Their career aspirations become altered. Their staff are likely to become narrow-minded, resort to be being very self-absorbed and averse to taking risks. Morale sinks, productivity drops and they distrust management, fearing future cutbacks. Diminishing expectations of a career future accompany these symptoms. Efforts by the employer to enhance the quality of goods and services are severely hampered in these conditions. Career development support systems are needed more than ever in such times. The methodology, properly implemented, can restore morale and faith in management.

3 Career Counselling

Employer's Involvement

Career counselling is the process of helping another person deal more effectively with the problems of living and working. Every person who is responsible for the production, performance and welfare of another employee is involved in either effective or damaging counselling. This way of looking at counselling emphasises the importance of every person in authority in an employment setting having the ability to listen and talk to subordinates in a respectful, humane and caring manner; and recognising the necessity of doing so. Anything less than sensitivity to the problems of employees can create resentment towards management and their employment situation. This resentment, while often not revealed directly by staff, may find expression in more hidden forms such as grievance disputes, low productivity, absenteeism and staff turnover.

The role of counselling in the context of career development support is to deal with any personal and/or interpersonal problem which is causing difficulty for the employee and is reflected in job performance and/or relationships at work. Counselling is a complex process and those engaged in it can never cease to learn. There are many texts available for those intent on learning more through the experiences of others. Several are listed in the Bibliography.

Is career counselling undertaken in order to maintain or increase productivity or is it for the individual's sake? Confusion over this basic question often exists. If we recognise the growing role of every employee in the well-being of an organisation, the question answers itself. An employer needs to have concern for the staff's personal welfare as well as for productivity. The growth of more democratic work organisational structures and concern for employees are all part of the human resources development movement, and is good business practice.

If the counsellor is sufficiently skilled and the person is motivated to receive help, the employee has an opportunity to relate to another person their successes and failures, strengths and weaknesses, problems, fears, anxieties and anything which blocks the person from successful career management and work performance.

Career counselling is a planned professional event in which two individuals contract to solve or define a worklife problem. One technique or counselling method is insufficient for all problem definitions which are likely to arise.

An important factor to bear in mind is that resistance to facing a problem often arises when the employee is approached in a judgmental, blaming or accusing manner. The approach should be one of understanding. Most people do not deliberately mess up their jobs or lives. There are often reasons behind such behaviour of which they are quite unconscious. Counselling goes nowhere when carried out in a blaming mood. The approach, therefore, has to be made in a manner which shows understanding that there is usually much pain and hurt in the person who is experiencing job-related problems.

The employer gains as well as the employee when a successful outcome is achieved as a result of accepting that counselling is a necessary part of employing people.

Need for help: People clearly need counselling when they are not coping well with a worklife problem and the negative stress that is usually associated with this. Some will say to leave well alone unless the employee's job performance is significantly affected. I believe that when problems are recognised early, an effort should be made to approach the employee and offer assistance. Anything which blocks them from living successfully and affects performance at work is a matter that requires the support and advice of another.

This is most likely to occur at any one of a number of career decision crossroads such as:

- Uncertainty over further education selection. Here, the outcomes in terms of real benefits to an individual's personal needs and career goals must be evaluated. The career implications of completing the course successfully need to be examined. Informed advice is needed before the person commits to an extensive program of study

- Inability to make a decision about career path options, where a person lacks confidence about personal potential, is uncertain about real or imaginary blocks and barriers to implementing ideas, or there is conflict within family or other significant relationships over proposed plans
- Feelings of being blocked in career development. These could result from the relationship with the boss, being bored or depressed about job content, or from doubts about qualifications and experience, or the need for more recognition or reward
- Loss of confidence or fear of rejection. Either can occur when an employee needs to make promotion, transfer or job-seeking applications. Counselling can be beneficial and provide useful coping techniques for feelings of increasing uncertainty about the future. It may also be relevant for the person to learn how to maintain and even enhance the momentum of a career action step and develop skills that enable them to plan thoroughly
- Coping with imminent redundancy or unemployment. Coming to terms with the situation, identifying ways to cope, and finding the personal resources to re-establish a career in a more fruitful environment are all concerns that a person may face. Consideration of a career change may also be beneficial in such situations

These are the kinds of problems that those engaged in career counselling regularly encounter. Such a service can help the person put their situation in perspective and can establish what changes can and should be considered. By helping employees to understand themselves better through counselling, employers can enable them to identify the most appropriate career strategy to adopt. Systematic self-analysis and consideration of the possible alternatives can allow them to reach better decisions. Above all, effective counselling provides a facility for uninhibited conversation, unbiased advice and companionship during the career transition.

> *I learnt from my counsellor to acquire knowledge that reinforces my strengths. Not to spend mental and physical energy on becoming more proficient in my weak areas or on where I have low motivation.*

Counselling support for employees is provided by managers, careers advisers and worklife counsellors. All are concerned with helping a person resolve confusion about the different options they face in their worklife.

A careers adviser generally focuses on the 'nine to five' existence and is concerned with matching aptitudes, skills, values and interests to specific jobs and types of employment environments. The approach taken by a worklife counsellor is broader. Here, the counsellor is concerned that career actions are evaluated in terms of the employee's perspective on life as a whole. Focus is not restricted to the employee's role as an employee. The relationships between career goals and lifestyle plans are included in the evaluation.

Both must have a substantial experience of the world of work, up-to-date knowledge of education facilities and entry requirements and an ability to empathise with strangers and their problems. And both have a common theme to their work—that a trained person, listening in a certain way, can bring an awareness of a new approach to the problems the employee shares with them and of the strengths and skills that the person has to resolve them.

Figure 17

A DEFINITION OF A WORKLIFE COUNSELLOR

The counsellor focuses on work-related concerns and helps the client/ employee account for other personal life concerns that have an impact on work and career direction. Attention is paid to self-development, life-stage problems, relationships and internal well-being.

The counsellor shows how to collect relevant data in a variety of ways, but rarely through using psychological tests, and then assists the client/employee to arrive at career agendas, goals and a schedule for their achievement. The counsellor then trains the client/employee in the selection of appropriate career transition strategies/job-seeking methods and tactics.

Resistance to help: There are good reasons to deal with worklife problems earlier rather than later. However, many people are reluctant to admit that they are coping poorly. The myth that we can solve all our own problems alone helps to create a denial process within us. Yet, if the difficulties are not resolved, this could be reflected in declining job performance and relationships with work colleagues whose cooperation is essential.

Many people do tend to find ways to 'self-destruct'. There are reasons for this behaviour, but they are sometimes not aware of them. Those in supervisory positions should watch out for signs, of both a verbal and non-verbal nature, from an employee that something is bothering them. It is important to recognise that there is a need for counselling when this occurs.

Many employees do not believe in their ability to bring about positive change in their worklife. They may not believe because they have not yet learnt the methods and strategies by which this may be achieved, or they place their conviction in a 'job fairy' that will materialise at some stage to put things right. Sometimes it is necessary for the 'job fairy' to arrive in an unwelcome manner. Frequently this is in the form of a career setback which can stimulate the individual to initiate some 'self-help' action. Both sets of attitudes require different forms of client support, which can be given by an appropriately trained counsellor.

If, however, an employee feels a rigidly structured approach is being taken by the counsellor, they will resist counselling. The employee is unlikely to develop the necessary trust required as a prelude to sharing personal information or taking actions viewed as hazardous to career safety.

Internal and external characteristics: Resolving career-related problems brings many rewards. One of the more important is that an individual comes to realise that they do, in fact, have a career. In identifying a career they declare an identity that they intend to create for themselves and which will benefit them, their employer and those around them for whom they care. Their career is how they describe themselves to themselves regardless of the label—their job title—imposed on them by their employer or a dictionary of occupations. Declaring what career they have is a purposeful statement that helps them give meaning to their lives. Once declared, they also know that they will need to review it again and again and, if necessary, re-align or change their career declaration.

In observing hundreds of people grappling with their career dilemmas, and progress towards choosing between a number of career action options, I have noticed that both external and internal characteristics influence their decision, such as:

External (Visible to Others):

- Occupational title
- Employment benefits
- Status
- Ability
- Behavioural style
- Pay
- Location
- Influence over others
- Career Direction
- Lifestyle

Internal (Private to the Person):

- Self-concept
- Goals
- Motivation
- Preferences
- Frustration
- Unexpected events
- Relationships
- Hopes
- Values
- Transferable skills
- Feelings
- Expected events
- Non-events
- Perceived expectations of others

These external and internal characteristics are interdependent and undergo continual change. Personal career management involves the success with which people manage the interrelation of these different factors. Critical to this is the need for an adequate knowledge of self. Everything an individual needs to know to resolve feelings of dissatisfaction already exists within them. The challenge is to identify reliable methods of taking stock of each of the aspects of their internal self and relate them in a systematic way to the external characteristics. Hence, employees themselves, more than employers, create and maintain attitudes which lead to a deeper sense of annoyance, sometimes bitterness, and feelings of being trapped in a particular career situation, unless they undertake this essential self-exploration as part of their career journey.

Counselling beliefs: Counselling is most effective when the counsellor, whether a fellow employee or specialist engaged from an external source, helps the employee to identify self-help measures and procedures so that the person is able to solve their own problems and plan their own quest for information, rather than have the answers dictated to them.

There are several beliefs influencing the way in which counsellors focus on worklife problem solving and the success of such counselling. They are:

- It is important for people to plan their own futures
- Learning the skills of career planning and self-assessment is an integral part of total personal development
- Self-knowledge is critical for successful decision making
- People need to have, or know how to find, an accurate knowledge of career paths and jobs that are suitable for their unique characteristics, and to keep this knowledge up-to-date in a constantly changing employment environment

The objective of the employee-counsellor relationship is to enable the former to change in some beneficial way. The relationship is an informal one—a manner of befriending each other—and the employee should be able to have prompt access to the counsellor when necessary. The counsellor, within this informal framework, must stay in charge of the process, control the duration of consultations and maintain a non-directive approach. Both employee and counsellor retain the right to terminate the relationship at any stage.

Third party counselling support: Providing counselling support to an employee so that they can find a clearer sense of direction benefits management as well the employee. Problem areas can be improved upon when information which does not compromise the confidentiality of the counselling is shared. In-company career counselling support services can be ineffective for some people who may be reluctant to discuss their private and personal career interests with another employee or in front of workshop participants. An approach that gives more time for reflection and ensures confidentiality is to refer them to a carefully chosen counselling resource external to the organisation known as a third party service.

A typical third party service relating to career issues will provide a confidential service to employees and help them find solutions to the following issues in their worklife:

- Coping with uncertainty about their future career
- Lack of confidence about personal potential

- Recognition of real or imaginary barriers to implementing career actions
- Clarification of interests and values, skills and abilities
- Depth and extent of information about career path alternatives
- How to relate to superiors and/or colleagues at the place of work
- Implementing change in career aspirations or lifestyle
- How to cope with feelings of job boredom and depression
- Adjusting to changed work routines and reorganisations
- Feelings of need for recognition and reward

The third party counselling service support is likely to include:

- Systematic assessment of abilities, qualifications, experiences, preferences, and career plans, so that employees in need may gain a fuller appreciation of all that can be offered to their employer
- Guided exploration of career action alternatives, since employees often have a restricted knowledge of how their background can best be put to use
- Help with the preparation of a résumé where relevant (a valuable procedure for negotiating current job enrichment, promotion or transfer)
- Assertiveness training to improve self-presentation
- Advice on stress management where adverse effects are occurring in the employee's life

Counselling in Practice

Multiple concerns: Those who seek, or are offered, counselling are likely to have not one but a range of concerns. While the primary concern may be negotiating with the boss for a change at work, or identifying an alternative career, there will be other concerns that have a bearing on the counselling process and outcomes. Employees are likely to be in an underlying state of fear, anxiety, guilt, pride and self-doubt and to be experiencing some degree of difficulty with important relationships both within and outside the current employment environment. Humans commonly feel under some obligation to give into forces they perceive as existing outside of themselves. But really they are within them, and therefore under their control. It is easier for a person to declare 'I would do such and such, but because of x or y I am unable to.' What a counsellor seeks to do is increase the employee's control over their life by means of perseverance and experimentation so that they become self-motivated.

To start the process of isolating how many of these multiple concerns and what they are, exist, it can be useful to commence a counselling discussion by having the employee complete a checklist like the one illustrated in Figure 18.

Figure 18

AID TO IDENTIFYING CONCERNS AND THE COUNSELLING OBJECTIVES

Please help me to help you by indicating the kind of career support assistance you are seeking. To do so check the appropriate items below:

Tick (✓)
____ Help with life planning concerns
____ Need for career information
____ Determining appropriate type of career path in relation to training and work experience
____ Determining appropriate type of career path in relation to interests, values, skills and personality
____ Learning more about my skills and capabilities
____ Changing current job
____ Help in obtaining a part-time job/job-sharing arrangement/freelance consulting with the organisation
____ Obtaining a job overseas/interstate with the organisation
____ Job prospects analysis
____ Résumé guidance
____ Application counselling (job, promotion, transfer)
____ Interview training
____ Decision-making guidance
____ Help with further education course selection
____ Help with mature-age entry application (tertiary education)
____ Choosing a new career path
____ Preparing for next performance review with manager
____ Determining legal rights in current employment situation
____ Other ____

Client's agenda: Naturally, in any problem-solving encounter, a form of diagnosis needs to take place at the initial meeting. The person may articulate the problem in many ways. It may be stated as: 'I need help with résumé writing.' 'I am unhappy with the job I do and want to change.' 'The person with whom I share a home says I am becoming difficult to live with due to my complaints about my job.' 'I have a performance review and career planning discussion scheduled with my manager and don't know what to say.' There are many more ways in which a worklife issue is presented. The counsellor needs to ask questions which probe to what extent the employee is aware of career self-management and their role within it.

Employees commonly commence the association with the counsellor with many gaps in their readiness and ability to decide what is in fact their problem, what they need, and why they are coming to the counsellor. The first task of the counsellor is to identify the gaps. It is highly likely that the employee needs to be taken through other aspects of the career problem resolution process before the stated need can be addressed appropriately. Whatever way the initial problem is stated, the counsellor needs to work to a model of analysis to determine at what stage of the counselling process it is best for them to commence—i.e. at the beginning or some other stage.

As a guide to this early diagnostic work, the following is useful for developing questions to establish where to start the counselling support to the employee:

Step 1: Self-assessment

Who am I? What is really important to me?

Step 2: Generating implications

What kind of job content, employment environment, or lifestyle changes are implied by this self-assessment?

Step 3: Seeking data on opportunities

Where do I look? With my current employer? External to my current job?

Step 4: Focusing on the solution to the career problem

What will I target to achieve and how?

Step 5: Seeking and generating options

How do I make contact with others who can assist me? What other sources of information are relevant and where are they?

Step 6: Assessing options

How do I evaluate the options? How do I make a decision about my next career action?

Step 7: Managing the transition

How do I manage the period from deciding and progressing to the achievement of the new goal?

Step 8: Worklife survival and career progress protection

Having achieved the career action, what more do I need to learn in order to enhance its value to me and reduce the likelihood of career setbacks?

Once this diagnosis is complete, the counsellor needs to assess the manner in which the employee should be introduced to the activities necessary to achieve a successful outcome to the career transition: where to start, at what stage and how long the journey is likely to take. Rigid adherence to a counselling procedure is not good human care practice. Adjustment to the individual nature of the employee is essential and is a developed skill. Each person has a unique pattern of attitudes, strengths and inhibitions as well as deficiencies in career transition skills and information. The special challenge of this nature of work is to remain responsive to how the employee is emotionally and be sensitive to changes in this emotional state throughout the counselling period. Skill in maintaining such flexibility while conforming to a structured approach and formula ensures career counselling is not 'just listening to other people's troubles all day long.' It is not like being in the person's bedroom out of sight and fully clothed, as one person commented to me in a counsellor-training situation I was leading some time ago!

In many career dilemma situations, time is a critical factor. Sometimes the employment security of the person has been threatened, or will be shortly. Time may be needed for special training or to meet the schedules of others. The counsellor needs to establish the timetable for resolution—the degree of urgency—before detailing the method and sequence for resolving the issues shared and diagnosed. Where there is critical urgency, it may be necessary to assist in solving one issue in particular, and in so doing most effectively reduce the employee's distress, or concentrate on an issue for which a successful outcome can be achieved relatively easily.

As a counsellor is unlikely to meet with an employee unless that person is are unhappy about something, some degree of low morale and stress will be evident. Consequently, it is useful to introduce the person to an element of fun and curiosity in the process of resolving their issues. As self-assessment is the first and major task, describing this procedure as comparable with detective activity is useful. The inductive element of analysis, sorting through expanses of information recorded about self, looking for clues to themes and linking the themes to specific career development actions, observing how one item of data logically connects with another, testing the conclusions—all comprise an activity of discovery, challenge and excitement.

> *So here I am restructuring who I am, what I am about, and what I want out of life. This is a tall order, and everyone I know has an opinion on what I should do, which I don't really need at this juncture.*

Counsellor's obligations: Engaging in career counselling imposes many obligations upon the counsellor. If the counsellor finds these untenable then he or she should change their job tasks. One of these obligations is the confidentiality of the information shared by the person. This will be tested many times. It may be tested by telephone calls from the significant other in an employee's life; by requests from concerned relatives; by the manager in charge of the human resource function of which the counsellor is a member; by the manager of the person involved; by approaches from employers who are funding the consultations if you are in private practice. It will be tested by the way in which a counsellor relates anecdotes about how past clients accomplished their career transitions, even though the motivation may be honourable, as a method of imparting confidence to the current client.

I have a rigid regulation governing my work which is not shared by all counsellors, and this is that no written report will be compiled or communicated unless the client is given the right to place an embargo on the contents. This results in several organisations choosing not to engage my services, but it is something in which I strongly believe.

In private practice all this is relatively easier to accomplish. When the counsellor is an employee of the same organisation as the client, however, the situation is more complicated. Yet, few of us would question that for a chance of successful outcomes to be possible, clients must feel free and be able to express many thoughts, to tell of their judgments and values, to expose their fears and frustrations, to admit their failures and embarrassments or to boast comfortably about their achievements. Before they can be assisted to learn and to understand what it is they really are or can become, this must take place. They must feel sure that the counsellor will keep confidences confidential.

Since career problem solving requires a commitment of time and energy by both the employee and counsellor, it is important to clarify the relationship at its beginning. Ascertaining the person's expectations is followed by explaining what the counselling relationship can and cannot accomplish and communicating an estimate of the likely duration. Most career-related problem solving will require the person to complete several self-assessment structured analyses, carry out extensive research between consultations and meet regularly with the counsellor to discuss the diagnosis, progress and their activities and feelings.

It is important that the counsellor presents this scenario at the first meeting. Unless the employee is really serious about seeking resolutions to their concerns and prepared to apply the necessary time and effort, it is better that the counselling relationship is ended.

> *I just needed to make one positive step and then I found the rest followed.*

Motivation: We counsellors are, in essence, motivators. But, in the process of our relationship with each person, we set out to accomplish a transference of this motivational power from us to them, otherwise it will evaporate at the conclusion of each counselling consultation. Through the use of conversational skill and diagnostic ability we enable a person to accept that there is freedom to make choices and changes.

No one, in my experience, is devoid of personal constraints. This originates in a perception of their necessity to comply, to conform in some way, to subvert their real selves. Our job is to assist the person reduce this restricted, confining vision and expand their sense of freedom and possibilities. There are many things we cannot do about our lives, but they are fewer than most people tend to think. When the boundaries of this freedom have been expanded by skilled counselling, then the employee can progress to acting in ways that are more a reflection of the real person.

> *Conducting the self-analysis has served to make me aware of my highly developed need to please and to be useful to others. This results in my being extremely conscientious, but I lack the ability to conserve energy.*

This is more difficult to accomplish when the employee is experiencing a career setback. Being fired, made redundant, or losing out at work in relation to some coveted desire can all cause people to have an enclosed sense of their boundaries of personal freedom and feel that life is a matter of following the lead of others, reacting rather than being proactive. A 'victim' mentality is frequently evidenced during counselling and an attitude of powerlessness conveyed. Counselling a person who is experiencing a current career setback is difficult and thereby more challenging.

Each employee who seeks out counselling needs to make a commitment. Without a commitment the individual will be defensive, uncooperative and the process will be inadequate and even fruitless. This commitment involves the person taking time to prepare for each consultation, and taking responsibility for what they need to learn. True feelings and concerns need to be shared in an uninhibited manner. The counsellor needs to establish early in the process that this commitment exists.

Figure 19

OUTLINE OF THE COUNSELLING PROCESS

Client relationship	➧	securing rapport / empathy
Exploration	➧	listening and questioning skills
Understanding	➧	interpreting accurately
Designing and	➧	team problem solving
implementing action	➧	securing commitment to plan
Reviewing career actions taken	➧	suggesting relevant new learning requirements

Counselling Client Management

Each counsellor will develop their own method of career support counselling. The method I have found the most effective for me and for my clients involves structured analysis, stimulus questionnaires and homework:

Structured analysis: This is a method by which an employee can gather and record data about themselves and extract trends, themes and key factors in an orderly manner. This approach is well suited to developing an understanding by the employee of how he or she makes important life decisions and plans. It requires that they first pay attention to assessing who they really are today and how the person has developed over a period of time. This longitudinal approach enables the employee to trace the influences the events of their past have had on their present situation. By using structured analysis questionnaires, insights can be gained into the motivations and activities that have led the person to feel and act as they do today, as well as important clues for future directions for career growth. By creating a state of self-understanding the employee is better placed to determine their career future. The questionnaires expand their self-knowledge and their awareness of the rich tapestry of their skills, motivations and attributes.

The various questionnaires used in structured self-analysis can present problems in client management. The employee can often feel anxious while responding to them if they assume that the questionnaires are formulated for evaluating them. Previous experiences of taking tests, aptitude tests, examinations and the like can contribute to an impression that there is a right and wrong answer or that their responses will reveal them to be 'bright' or 'unintelligent'. Anxiety can be raised to uncomfortable levels as a consequence and the person may fall into the error of responding with less honesty as a result of these erroneous assumptions of measurement. The counsellor should monitor the reactions and set out to reassure them that the questionnaires will not and cannot tell the person what to do with their life; or tell how good a person they are. Their purpose is to provide relevant information that can assist in making better career-related decisions; the person remains in charge.

It is only natural for an employee to worry about how the counselling process will turn out. Some will see too much which is negative, others may delude themselves, making conclusions that are not sufficiently substantiated. Again, the counsellor is the guardian of the process, to ensure that it is not misused—that it is not seen as an evaluator of the person. The emotional drain on people in consulting situations is considerable. The challenge for the counsellor is to assist in maintaining the employee's morale as they strive towards a clearer view of themselves. Yet, once this is accomplished, seldom have any of my clients not felt proud of their accomplishment and the knowledge and skills they have gained on how to prepare for and execute satisfying career and life management decisions.

> *I think a lot and analyse things and this ties in with being able to wander around in my work and release myself from the designated 'work only' areas of the office. I seem to prefer fast-paced deadline orientated atmospheres—but I will need to be able to take time out to keep in control.*
>
> *My homework assignment is proving to be the biggest and perhaps the most important task I have ever undertaken. So many questions I have never asked myself and no real way of assessing which are the best answers. Maybe I should have done what my friend did, and take two months off!*

Stimulus questions: Stimulus questions are found in a series, or sets, of questionnaires which break down the process of gathering data for each stage of career review, decision making, planning and implementation. Stimulus questions enable an employee to gather data about what is relevant to their career decision making and discard what is not. The questions are asked in a carefully determined order and provoke reflections, analysis and opinion forming. They help the person make coherent sense of the myriad of facts and events in their life to date. Their responses to each set of stimulus questions contribute to the various stages of data gathering essential to risk-reducing career planning.

As the person progresses through such questionnaires they are learning through doing, expanding their awareness of options and forming personal resolutions. They can undertake them alone—in privacy—as a form of homework. The person can proceed with their responses at their own pace. Stimulus questions within questionnaires do not lead directly to a list of occupations on which to base career decisions. The employee is guided to initiate their own career exploration and develop detective, communication and research skills which enable them to carry out the task of matching their requirements with types of occupations and employment environments.

Figure 20

STIMULUS QUESTIONNAIRES

Characteristics

- Provide structured review of relevant factors for career decisions
- Prompt data which may otherwise be missed or ignored
- Record data which has practical applications
- Require memory search and self honesty
- Usually improve self-esteem
- Are completed at own pace and in privacy
- Make order of an otherwise confusing array of data
- Provide the comfort of acting rather than being passive about one's career fate

Samples of Stimulus Questions

- What work tasks and skills usage do I really enjoy?
- What kind of activities cause me to be so involved that I lose track of time?
- What do I avoid or put off doing though I have the training and experience for the activities?
- What seven or eight words sum up the way I approach problem solving?
- With what kind of work colleagues do I work best?
- In retrospect, what career accomplishments do I regard as most worthwhile?
- What makes me feel really good when I do it well?
- What new learning appeals to me most over the next three years?
- What working conditions have stimulated me to produce well?
- In what work situations have I been at my most innovative?

Some people experience difficulty with self-search exercises of this nature. They may want a speedy resolution to their problem, a quick fix. Some will not experiment adequately with such questionnaires before concluding that they do not need them or that this method is unappealing. Reluctance to commit personal thoughts in writing—even private notes—will deter others. If an employee experiences these obstacles, it is commonsense to seek out a career counsellor who can introduce alternative methods of resolving their particular career problem.

Employees who take to the stimulus questions method acquire the value of feeling more in charge of their career direction, and, as they progress through them, their self-confidence inevitably rises. They become confident that their diligence will bring the results they deserve for undertaking the effort. Their motivation to see the task through to a satisfying conclusion usually soars.

Unless the person shows a real commitment to change or take the actions necessary to achieve an improvement in their worklife, stimulus questions are of limited use. Another barrier is trying to make critical life management or major career decisions after only small amounts of data has been gathered. Skimping on the task, avoiding responding to stimulus questions that require deep thought and decisiveness will not produce adequate results. It may take many weeks of strenuous effort before effective decisions and workable plans can be formulated.

This amount of effort can itself be a deterrent. The motivation to change current circumstances needs to be strong. It demands self-discipline, fortitude and patience to be thorough through the data-gathering stages. The process is self-evaluative. It requires courage for someone to see themselves as they really are and like the result.

In my book, *Stop Postponing The Rest of Your Life,* I have published 54 questionnaires containing stimulus questions. There are a further series of stimulus questionnaires in another book of mine, *Your Career Planner: Reducing The Risks to Those Worth Taking.* In most major book stores there are several alternative titles containing questionnaires devised for the same purpose—in other words, to facilitate the self-exploration process of employees determined to help themselves. I have listed some of these titles in the Bibliography at the conclusion of this book. Many self-help books containing career planning questionnaires are too narrow in scope or gloss over issues and steps that may be critical to a successful self-help process, so choose carefully.

Figure 21

STIMULUS QUESTIONS METHOD

Possible Benefits

- Inspires self-help among those with concerns about career issues
- Guarantees employee's participation—they don't just read the material, they do it'
- Helps the person cope with issues that can be handled only by them
- Will appeal to them if they prefer to analyse important issues about themselves privately
- They can consider and make judgments and choices over a period of time
- Facilitates focusing on what is really important in employee's work and life management
- Enables them to identify what is their responsibility and what is another's, such as an employer, concerning their career development
- Helps them to identify where help is needed from others
- Is useful as 'homework' before or between counselling sessions with a career adviser
- Time-saving resource to use, as published questionnaire materials exist for them to follow
- Reduces the career hazard of an employee demanding from their employer career development support which is neither appropriate nor adequately justifiable
- Helps them prepare requests for their manager in his or her career coaching role

The 'homework' approach: The extensive content and time involved, the serious nature of the issues, the different degrees of urgency, the various aspects of their relationships with others and the varying degrees of employee comfort with self-review combine to make the face-to-face counselling meeting an inadequate forum for all that is required in career problem solving. Whether a direct or indirect questioning technique is used, the counsellor will not elicit all the necessary data and in the appropriate form through consultative interviews alone. Assigning homework for the person to undertake between consultations is a procedure I have followed for fourteen years. Not only does it produce the additional data necessary, it helps make it clearer to the person that they have ownership over the process and ultimate decision making. I use the homework statement reproduced in this section as a means of introducing the concept of homework as a way of helping.

Figure 22

HOMEWORK

Client's Introductory Statement

In career counselling and worklife planning homework serves several important functions. It helps you to apply the key points gained in our initial consultation meeting. It can prod you to gather new, more thorough data regarding the issues you are seeking to resolve. It can also serve as a form of reality testing for suggested courses of personal action. Just as important, your homework provides a bridge between each of our discussions and, in the process, emphasises that you are responsible for your own destiny. One of my roles is to assist you to gain this control.

The homework assignments not only improve the progress made towards resolving your problems, but also help highlight possible obstacles to achieving your goals. This provides me with an opportunity to advise you on how to overcome them.

By working on the selected homework assignments, you can move further towards resolving your concerns.

The homework assignments are carefully selected to suit your particular needs and career situation. This is established once my initial diagnostic work is done and you agree that we have reached a clear understanding of the worklife issues to be solved and have defined them in specific terms. On your part, you should ensure that your understanding of the homework assignments is clear. Do not hesitate to ask 'Why is it important for me to complete this?' You have the right to understand my reasons for making suggestions or using particular procedures. I will keep anything that you record in strictest confidence unless I have your permission to tell someone.

In our busy lives there are numerous distractions which can impede completion of the homework. Please discuss with me any potential problems that may impede not only completion but also the pleasure of moving forward to a greater understanding of self, increased self-confidence and the emergence of a clear course of action.

The homework is both constructive and therapeutic. It considerably enhances your progress towards successful outcomes. It is a means for you to expand your career transition skills so that you shortly become self-reliant and no longer need my help.

If the employee has come to the consultation for 'potted' answers and to be told what to do, the conscientious career counsellor should comment on the reasons for the homework approach. In the event that the employee declines to follow this method, then the person should be referred elsewhere. Career counselling is a teamwork approach with the employee, not a 'tell and sell' relationship.

It may be necessary to state to the person the benefits of the homework method for starting the helping process. One or more of the following benefits may suffice to motivate them and can be drawn to their attention:

- Writing down data as homework will not only be useful for resolving current problems but also serves as a guide to career issues occurring in the future
- The process causes one to think more clearly and carefully and to make explicit what is already within you in a way that is useful
- When written information about the self is recorded you can gain some emotional distance and view the data more objectively
- It allows you to obtain the views of others whose opinion is respected and/or is involved in the outcomes
- The progress towards problem-resolution can be monitored and personal growth and development is easier to detect. This promotes a sense of positivity
- Reading your recordings far surpasses relying solely on memory to recall your resolutions, conclusions, action steps and resources

- The homework substantially increases inductive skill. The slower procedure of thinking and writing rather than thinking alone provides opportunities to perceive the connections between events, data, changes, setbacks, accomplishments and past and present relationships with people and employers

Homework allows the employee considerable latitude in responding to the questions within the structured analyses. What and how they choose to answer in writing can tell us important information about the person. What is recorded, what is not, and how it is recorded are useful data for the counsellor. As the employee progresses with the homework into a more inductive phase of self-assessment this will reveal what consideration is being given to the relationship between data, assumptions and inference. By noting these, the counsellor can be at their most helpful with the advice they give.

The homework method of client management also allows the flexibility to take the career transition at a different pace for each person, according to the counsellor's assessment of the degree of motivation, timetable for results and state of morale of the employee. The homework can be segmented and, in a prescriptive manner, exercises selected and set for accomplishment in the interval between consultations.

Here is a series of comments recorded by past clients of mine which illustrate the influence of the homework approach:

> *I am still working on the homework you have set me. I am not sure why I have delayed. It could be I am delaying facing the issues raised in the questions.*
>
> *For the first time in my life I had achieved an excellent result in the endeavour of writing up my life and work experiences. I noticed I had succeeded in a number of areas through the sheer assertion of my will, use of skills and belief in the purpose.*
>
> *Since I've done this career analysis I see that I am my own person. I see that I have had courage in past career events and now know that I can use the same courage to make anything happen correctly for me from now on.*

> *Perhaps there is a clue to my future career in my love of betting on horses. Here, I find the enjoyment of predicting a result without any magic wand—only my mind and imagination, of earning money without having to conform to conventional work practices or routines, and a feeling of being part of something exciting and living it through as it happens.*
>
> *I now know I am happiest where the borders of traditional work and traditional leisure, play and relaxation blur. For the first time I have really taken time to spend with myself and grapple with learning what actions to take. The days have been filled with exploring and discovering totally new ways and discovering the wonders of self-help.*
>
> *I really looked hard at my personality—not just what I was good at, but what I enjoyed and handled well, and what I didn't, where my real strengths were and how they fitted in. I didn't follow your more formal way but made notes on scraps of paper during seemingly endless thinking spells and discussions with others.*
>
> *After doing each homework exercise I found that a few things kept coming to the fore which were similar. It revealed the things that I should set out to avoid in my next career action.*

Interpreting the homework: The person's completed homework may take the form of responses to direct or indirect questions, one line responses, prose style commentaries, 'yes' and 'no' replies to questions posed, work history details, the use of psychometric diagnostic aids and/or their life story in chronological form.

Whether people can interpret their own homework is not dependent on their individual intelligence, motivation or deductive skill. Many will complete the structured self-search assignments and regard having completed them to be all that is required. They should not be cajoled, nor should further help be denied until they have formulated a career action plan. The skilled helper is relied upon to interpret the data and formulate recommendations. Others will proceed seemingly effortlessly into conclusions that initially appear well reasoned and explicit. In all cases, the counsellor's role is to monitor the progress and read the responses with care, striving in a clinical fashion to complete the diagnosis independently from the person's favoured conclusions. The fact that the counsellor may grow to agree with them should be seen as a separate process to that of evaluating their data independently. The counsellor is the checker, the person who seeks to detect self-delusions, unsubstantiated conclusions, incorrect interpretations of events, or inadequate appraisal of talents, skills and competencies. They are the person who looks for patterns that might indicate stable interests and preferences and what the client likes and dislikes, and the reasons for these attitudes. They need to bypass superficial statements, to note the underlying anxieties and doubts and to note the progress made towards making a commitment to a career action. Whilst doing this, they must keep in mind that it is the employee who will have to live with the choice and hence he or she must make it, not the counsellor on their behalf.

When the counsellor reviews the concluding career goal and career action plan, a number of checks need to be made, such as: the logic of the inferences drawn by the employee from themes apparent in their self-assessment information; the logic of the connections made between themes, apparent implications and the career action proposed; and the logic of the connections made between themes, apparent implications and lifestyle plans. As well, they should look at how detailed the career goal and action plan are and the specific schedule for implementing them, the assessment of available resources (their career record documentation, people, printed word, money, etc.) to support the career transition and the realism of the perceived constraints to successful outcomes.

When checking the person's own conclusions, the counsellor should do the following:

- Stay close to the data. Analyse what is recorded and avoid manufacturing what is not
- Search for patterns, conclusions, inferences, opinions . . . all must be supported by evidence that they are real, not merely 'casual ideas'
- Guard against their own bias. It is the uniqueness of the client they are reviewing, not what they think is the right way for the client to live their life
- Take adequate time. Good analysis requires patience, repeated reading, and periods of thought

> *I need to negotiate new employment. At the moment I lack the necessary skills for such a negotiation but I have scheduled assertiveness training and expect my self-confidence to rise as a consequence.*

The self-search problem-solving journey: In my book, *Stop Postponing the Rest of Your Life,* the range of 54 structured analysis exercises from which a client selects their homework. These cover the six stages of my model of career development. The exercises and the pages on which they appear are illustrated in Figure 23 to help readers who may use the book. They stimulate self-exploration, learning by doing, options awareness, personal resolutions and self-discovery. Clear directions are provided for recording responses, information, insights, consultations with others, reflections, action steps, reality testing, checklists and schedules.

While the most desirable situation is for an employee to complete all the exercises listed in Figure 23, there will be career development and life management issues that can be satisfactorily resolved by using a selection of exercises from each of the six stages. Omitting a stage or avoiding all exercises for any stage will jeopardise successful outcomes.

The analysis exercises emphasise learning through self-initiated exploration. People can undertake them alone—in privacy—as homework. They can proceed at their own pace through the career and life management review journey. Alternatively, a trainer can select some exercises to be undertaken during attendance at a workshop, or a counsellor can do likewise during a series of counselling meetings.

My model of career development is essentially a development-based concept, not a matching process. Users are not led to a list of occupations on which to base their career decisions. They are led to self-initiate career exploration and develop deductive, communication and research skills. The model requires the user to be self-sufficient, but does not preclude the need for—in fact, encourages—talking to others during the self-search problem-solving journey.

The important factor is that reading and thinking about career management rarely suffices when considering all that needs to be done to make significant changes in behaviour, attitude and degree of inner well-being in relation to worklife. A person who actively proceeds through the structured analysis exercises in *Stop*

Postponing the Rest of Your Life is learning the value of feeling more in charge of their career direction and enhancing the belief, and thereby their self-confidence, that their diligence will bring the results they deserve for undertaking this effort.

Figure 23

STOP POSTPONING THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

	Set	Done
Chapter 5 : Self-assessment	✓	✓
Diagnosing the real problem p 70	☐	☐
Audit your career situation p 71	☐	☐
Where are you right now? p 72	☐	☐
Learning from your experience p 74	☐	☐
Reflection p 74	☐	☐
Deficiency analysis (job content analysis) p 75	☐	☐
Objectives analysis (skills search) p 76	☐	☐
Achievement analysis (skills search) p 77	☐	☐
Behaviour analysis (employment environment) p 79	☐	☐
Event analysis (employment environment) p 80	☐	☐
Enjoyment factor (employment environment) p 82	☐	☐
Your personal wants (lifestyle analysis) p 83	☐	☐
Lifestyle fit p 85	☐	☐
Your fantasy analysis p 86	☐	☐
Your biographical review p 87	☐	☐
Chapter 6 : Interpreting Data		
Classifying your skills p 89	☐	☐
Gender bias—not theirs, but yours! p 93	☐	☐
Your inner and outer constraints p 93	☐	☐
Meeting other people's expectations p 95	☐	☐
Reflection p 96	☐	☐
Time allocation analysis p 97	☐	☐
Thinking ahead p 99	☐	☐
Your ideal job (1) p 99	☐	☐
Your ideal job (2) p 102	☐	☐
Reflection on completion of Chapter 6 p 102	☐	☐
Chapter 7 : Opportunity awareness		
Self-help group analysis p 103	☐	☐
Occupational analysis p 104	☐	☐
What you need to find out p 105	☐	☐
Occupational research p 106	☐	☐
Reality test audit p 108	☐	☐
Career transition strategy p 109	☐	☐

Chapter 8 : Decision learning		
Decision-making courage p 110	☐	☐
The next 24 hours p 111	☐	☐
Work environment analysis p 112	☐	☐
Employment environment conditions p 113	☐	☐
Your worklife expectations p 114	☐	☐
Your values p 114	☐	☐
Deciding where you want to work p 115	☐	☐
Objective setting p 116	☐	☐
Life planning p 117	☐	☐
Support group testing p 119	☐	☐
Career path decision making p 120	☐	☐
Chapter 9 : Transition training		
Worklife change analysis p 122	☐	☐
Career charting p 123	☐	☐
Audit your career transition preparation p 125	☐	☐
Commitment checklist p 126	☐	☐
Final check p 127	☐	☐
Is resignation necessary? p 127	☐	☐
Test your job-seeking skills p 129	☐	☐
Career transition checklist p 131	☐	☐

Client decision making: Effective counselling involves setting goals. The counsellor and employee must resolve the issue they are addressing by arriving at some attainable and reasonable goals that are specific and time-scheduled.

Those engaged in career counselling for some time know the danger of the impulse to short circuit the process and tell the person what to do. The counsellor's own career experiences, setbacks, achievements and education, and the results of the career transition actions of past clients all contribute to an ever expanding fund of knowledge of what works and what doesn't. Nevertheless, a counsellor's true role is as a facilitator for the person's own decision making. No doubt, a greater degree of skill and awareness of careers is within the counsellor. But the employee will be living with the consequences of the decisions required in the career transition. They have the primary responsibility for generating, evaluating and using the data that affects the decisions they make. After all, the fundamental process is self-assessment and self-determination.

> *All my concerns seem to be closely linked and dependent on one another. Achieving some of my objectives automatically means I will achieve the rest!*

A counsellor can be helpful in observing what the person reveals about the way in which they have made decisions in the past and comment on this interpretation constructively. Regardless of the background, each client has repetitively been faced with choices regarding what to do, how to do it, and when. Patterns in these choices can indicate the individual's decision-making style. That pattern is not likely to change substantially, but the nature of companionship through the decision-making process can.

Research into how people make decisions has been conducted for many years. This research has considerable bearing on the career transition process as people proceed through information gathering, evaluating, creating and implementing plans, then choosing and remaining satisfied with their choices. V.A. Harren published findings in 1979 about decision making which supports my observations about my clients' variations in decision-making styles. As a follow-up to his research, Harren designed a useful self-report diagnostic questionnaire entitled, Assessment of Career Decision Making (ACDM) to measure decision-making styles.

Briefly, Harren described three such styles: rational, intuitive and dependent. The rational decision-maker gathers information carefully, evaluates it objectively, decides on the basis of likely negative and positive consequences and is comfortable with self-accountability for the ultimate choice. The intuitive decision-maker has a tendency to decide emotionally and quickly. Their decision is likely to be affected by their current mood. Such a decision-maker tends to curtail the information-gathering phase and consult less with those likely to be affected by their implementation of the choice they have made. Understandably, there is resistance to completing homework assignments thoroughly between counselling sessions. The dependent style of decision-maker is heavily subject to the influence of others, both the counsellor and others such as significant other, friends, acquaintances and their manager at work. Such a client is likely to try to remain passive when involved in the career counselling process and can present frustrations to the counsellor who is endeavouring to stimulate the person to take both personal action and responsibility for their own career and related actions.

The purpose of worklife counselling is not to change the client's decision-making style radically. Such a quest will produce resistance, even antagonism. However, the counsellor, correctly diagnosing which decision-making style is more true of the client than another, needs to explain the inherent values, dangers and consequences. The client is likely to accept a carefully phrased explanation along these lines and to modify their approach in order to reduce the illustrated dangers of incomplete data gathering or of abdicating personal responsibility.

It is difficult to separate the realisation of the need and reasons for a decision from the decision itself. The former took me two years, deciding what I'd do as an alternative took only a weekend.

An approach to career decision making outlined by J. Krumboltz and D. Hamelin in *Guide to Career Decision-Making Skills* (Educational Testing Service, New York, 1977) is highly organised and detailed. They suggest there are seven steps in the process and that different adults will have difficulties with different steps because of inaccurate or unclear thoughts or beliefs. Their acronym DECIDES enables the steps to be described as:

Define the problem

Establish an action plan

Clarify values

Identify alternatives

Discover probable outcomes

Eliminate alternatives systematically

Start action

The DECIDES paradigm is not intended to infer that people transit the steps smoothly. For example, they may be at different points in their career decision-making process and this may influence how they act. Krumboltz has developed a career assessment instrument, published in 1988, which can help both the employee and the counselling support person who incorporates the seven steps, and this is entitled The Career Beliefs Inventory. The variation in the decision-making styles of adults, who will falter at different steps, has a direct implication for counsellors who use a rigid decision-making model and diligently apply each step of the model regardless of the behavioural nature of the individual. The outcomes are likely to be less satisfactory for both parties.

My own endeavour to assist people with deciding between options in their career and life management is illustrated in Figure 24.

Figure 24

A GUIDE FOR CAREER ACTION DECISION MAKING

Consider the decision you need to make. It is likely to be between two or more career action options, that is, alternatives.

Step 1: For each alternative, write down a list of as many outcomes as you can think of—that is, consequences that results from choosing that particular alternative. Some will be negative and others positive in nature.

Step 2: Assign to each outcome on the list a number, a value, from -10 to +10. When values approach 0, the outcome is of little, or low, importance in relationship to others on your list. Ensure that the negative outcomes are recorded as a minus, that is, -10 to -1

Step 3: For each outcome listed, evaluate the probability that it will happen. For example, 0 is that the outcome will definitely not occur. 10 is that it definitely will occur. 5 indicates a fifty-fifty chance that it will occur. Write these figures in the second column.

Step 4: Multiply the value of each outcome by the probability of it occurring. Write these answers in the third column. Add up this column.

Repeat this procedure for the other alternative(s).

Step 5: The alternative with the highest expected value is a **guide** to the most appropriate option for you to take.

Transition timing: In my early days of counselling I used to worry about those clients who did not return for more teamwork on their career dilemmas. As time passed, I noticed that most eventually did, although a considerable period had elapsed between our meetings—in some cases more than a year. I was falling into the trap of assuming all would progress through the career transition journey at a similar pace. It's obvious, when one pauses to think, that it is only natural for timing differences to exist, particularly when an adult undertakes considerable self review as part of their preparation for a worklife change.

The inner self must have enough time to pass through the stages of assimilating events, setbacks, achievements, memories and discriminating preferences from the many clues which lie within everybody's worklife experiences. To integrate more of our true self within our worklife and get both working together as a whole takes time—and a different amount of time for different people.

Transition training: Career development support is not complete until the employee has implemented the resolutions made during the self-analysis, opportunity awareness and decision learning phases. Many counsellors terminate their support at the decision learning stage. This may be because of their lack of knowledge of career action implementation strategies or job seeking techniques. This is understandable. There are, for example, 59 identified ways to job seek, and at least 20 alternative ways to format and design a résumé. In fact, the knowledge required to assist the implementation of a career action plan is considerable. I am fortunate in having been able to transfer knowledge of value to the transition training phase of career counselling from my former career as a personnel manager.

When a person has worked out, researched and tested the proposed career action, they are usually very enthusiastic about proceeding on to implement it. At this stage it is important to examine a range of alternative strategies for implementing it in relation to the assessment of personal skills that has been made. One strategy may suit a certain level of personal skills better than another.

Transition training is as much about techniques of implementation as about helping the person cope with and manage the change. The logic of the techniques needs to be coupled with an understanding of the emotional aspects of implementation. Transition training will draw on the counsellor's knowledge of resources, creative and divergent thinking and problem-solving skills. In some situations the counsellor may need to recognise their limitations and arrange a referral to people who are more competent to deal with the particular aspect causing difficulty. To assemble a list and contact information on such resource people is a wise and practical activity. Recognising one's limits as a counsellor in the transition training phase is important and sensible, and ensures that clients are helped effectively. This also helps the counsellor identify their own training needs so that they can extend their helping process competently and participate in the exciting, concluding phases of the person's resolution of their career issues and achieving the desired change.

Supporting the Client

The counsellor, whether an employee of the same organisation as the employee being counselled or external to the person's employment environment, needs to constantly remind themselves that their proper role is as a facilitator to the client. The temptation to tell them what to do based on their knowledge and experiences is a temptation I have referred to earlier. Yet, it is the latter which the employee expects to benefit from. Advice, whether in written or verbal form, should provide a framework upon which they can decide on their own action and the manner of implementing it.

While the counsellor should be a trusted confidant throughout a career transition experience, people need more companionship than is feasible in the counsellor-employee relationship. Hence, an early agenda in the process of consultation should be establishing what support the individual has. The nature of this support needs to be discussed: the degree of trust, confidentiality, depth and practicality.

A career transition is never accomplished alone. A person requires support from their loved ones, friends and acquaintances, strangers, counsellor and, desirably, the organisation of which they are a member. The person copes better with their career transition journey and the associated stresses if there is positive support from other people. They are more likely to cope in an adaptive way if they perceive that people they know are supportive of their efforts. Support from others can provide them with:

- A sense of shared involvement, motivation and belief
- A different perspective and another assessment of the situation

- A bond of trust and care
- A reinforcement of purpose and the process of reaching goals

When implementing a career action it is necessary to take into account whether both positive support exists and the needs of the significant other in the person's life are also being met by the chosen career action. Rarely does a person live in such isolation that their career-related action will not impact on others close to them. It is responsible and proper for the counsellor to raise the issue and, in some cases, provide practical means whereby the significant other can learn about and understand the nature of the counselling assistance.

Acquaintances and strangers: Beyond the arena of the counsellor-employee relationship, individuals will progress better with their career transition if they have access to another person with whom they can share the content of the counselling experiences and discuss the implications arising from each stage.

The employee may not have such a person within their own network. Here the counsellor may consider recommending a person with whom such discussions can take place, or provide guidance as to resources within the community from where this form of support may be obtained.

One of the more endearing features of my worklife is the willingness of past clients to volunteer to be such a mentor to 'strangers'. Consequently, I maintain a referral list of people prepared to lend themselves in such a human service manner. We all know the value of impartial counsel when we are grappling with personal decisions. We also know that among those who love us that impartiality is unlikely to be found. Their support for us comes in other forms. Hence, the helper need not know anything about the person with whom they are matched other than what is shared. I have found that this procedure is an important feature of career transition support work, and this is not surprising. Our literary heritage provides many expressions of this form of companionship. My favourite is by George Eliot, the pseudonym for Mary Ann Evans—"Oh the comfort, the inexpressible comfort, of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but to pour them all out, just as it is, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful ally will take and sift them, keeping what is worth keeping, and then, with the breath of kindness, blowing the rest away."

The art of career counselling demands many skills and one is always learning. In Figure 25 I have assembled a list of useful texts to help the study of the rich literature that is now available which can help those engaged in counselling learn more and enjoy the learning in the process.

Figure 25
DESIRABLE TEXT STUDY SEQUENCE FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN CAREER COUNSELLING

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR/DATE*
Overview of Individual and Organisational Career Issues	Key concepts with equal attention to both individual and organisational issues and perspectives	Wanous (1980) Jelinek (1979) Morgan (1980) London (1984) Mayo (1992)
Self-Assessment, Objective Setting and Individual Career Planning	Concepts and techniques for self-assessment. Use of experiential exercises for self-assessment and goal setting	Kotter et al. (1978) Storey (1976) Bolles (1984) Stevens (1982) Schein (1984)
Individual/Organisational Fit; Career and Lifestyle Choices	Concepts and techniques for analysis of organisations and positions. Examines career possibilities from several perspectives including advancement potential, lifestyle, and family needs/expectations	Kotter et al. (1978) Storey (1976) Bolles (1993) Stevens (1993)

* Date: Year in which most useful text / latest edition was published.

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR/DATE*
The Joining-Up Process and Socialisation	Discusses organisational entry, job expectations, preferred job attributes, career issues for young managers, and early job experiences. Some attention to organisational socialisation practices	Wanous (1980) Schein (1978) Morgan (1980) Jelinek (1979) Hall (1976)
Job-Seeking Strategies	Discusses vacancy identification, résumé formats, researching, interview strategies and employment offer negotiations.	Stevens (1989) Bolles (1993) Figler (1988)
Career and Life Stages	The career/life issues and concerns during early, mid, and late career stages. Focus is more on the individual than the organisational context	Hall (1976) Jelinek (1979) Sheehy (1983) Schlossberg (1985) Levinson (1978)
Career Issues for Minorities, Women, and Dual-Career Couples	Discrimination and unfair treatment of minorities and women. Special career development activities to compensate for their unique issues	Hall & Hall (1979) Morgan (1980) Jelinek (1979) Hall (1976) London (1984)

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR/DATE*
Human Resource Planning and Career Planning Practices	Concepts of human resource planning from the organisation's perspective. Individual and organisational responsibilities or career planning programs	Mayo (1992) Walker (1980) Kaye (1982) Stevens (1988)
Training and Development Programs	Information on organisational training and development activities. Different development activities for individuals in different career situations and as a function of organisational needs	London (1984) Kaye (1982) Stevens (1988)
Organisational Promotion and Transfer Decisions	How organisations make decisions about their employees	Kanter (1977) Storey (1976) Derr (1987)
Staffing Support Systems	Human resource systems used to facilitate career management. Covers such topics as succession planning, promotion lists, job posting, role models, sponsors and mentors	Kanter (1977) Storey (1976) Walker (1980) London (1984) Kaye (1982)

4 Coaching and Mentoring

Boss As Coach, Not As Counsellor

Over 30 years, I have observed and, in many cases, participated in endeavours to extend the skills of managers who supervise others. I have concluded that the expectation that all managers can be equipped with skills in human relationships, behaviour modification and, concurrently, be able to maintain their expertise in the technical aspects of their job is unrealistic and impractical. The expectation that all managers can be trained to be effective 'personnel managers' is not well-founded. Yet considerable expenditure continues to be made on forms of tuition in an endeavour to achieve this multi-faceted, multi-skilled role.

The manager unquestionably influences the employee's job assignments and the rewards they receive. The manager-employee relationship has a crucial effect on the motivation, attitudes and career outlook of the employee. The latter can learn from their manager how to do things and how not to do things, and what behaviours result in positive or negative outcomes. The manager is probably the most important source of feedback and reinforcement.

The way a manager manages is essentially judgmental, directive and task/problem focused. These elements are the opposite of those required for counselling when the purpose of the counselling is to motivate the employee to adopt self-help measures and to facilitate exploration and discovery while remaining non-judgmental. Counselling is person-focused. It is more realistic for a manager to be expected to coach employees, not counsel them. There are common skills in both processes—the ability to listen, be empathetic, be warm and genuine. They are nevertheless different processes. Fulfilling a counselling role demands an understanding of personality and behaviour, and how they affect relationships, and an ability to understand how the employee has come to be what they are and to see how best to react to each individual and the complex issues involved in worklife and career planning; in effect, it requires the inclination and ability to be a human carer.

This all demands considerable study, time and experience. To expect all managers to be able to accomplish this is unrealistic. Referral of employees to appropriate counselling resources is the more practical, realistic and potentially fruitful action many line managers should take. It is more effective for managers to know when and how to coach and when and how to refer the employee for counselling.

Career coach training: As organisations continue to improve their understanding of the implications of career support services and the impact they have upon employee behaviour and attitudes, the manager, as the representative of the organisation, has a critical role because of their continuing relationship with their staff.

The design of training in career coaching for managers should be approached from the position of developing an additional leadership skill inherent in all managerial roles. It is a discretionary job task activity and will succeed if the employee to be coached has the desire and the capacity to be involved in their own career planning. Self-help is an essential ingredient of an employee's personal career management, but as well as being exciting and challenging, it is also frequently laborious, time consuming and confusing. Career coaching involves motivating others to extend themselves, and for the employee to be motivated requires positive, supportive, reinforcing behaviours which focus on enhancing the value of the employee to their employer.

Employees need opportunities to probe new frontiers of skills usage and knowledge acquisition and require help with this. They will need to discuss these experiences and be assisted in defining the personal meaning of these new experiences. Training in career coaching should guide managers on how to help staff gain further insight and thus progress to the next level of competence in self-management. At the same time, it should give managers the ability to teach staff, in turn, about how they can avoid self-limiting or self-destructive tendencies. A good coach is regarded as essential to improving the performance of an athlete. The value of coaches is that they are not directly involved in the activity. Coaches can observe the performance and identify the critical areas requiring refinement. The next step is to provide training to managers in how to provide feedback to the 'athlete' in a manner that brings about a change in behaviour and improvement in the result.

Any training design will need to accommodate the fact that managers are employees too. They will have their own concerns about their personal careers and attitudes to career coaching and their own career development apprehensions and needs. Hence any training tuition design will need to be interactive so that individuals express their concerns; it will demand active listening and questioning techniques from the trainer; and will need to allow time to motivate indifferent participants who may see career coaching as an added task with no apparent tangible reward for the required effort. For these reasons it is wise for managers to be presented with a training event that includes the same content that their staff may experience on one day or more and to assign prescribed reading as homework. Then as a separate learning event this can be followed up with tuition about coaching roles and role-play skills practice, the development of plans for their own coaching skills development, and emphasis on the responsibility of managers to increase their awareness of the key issues in career coaching. The coaching roles are diverse and Figure 26 illustrates six types of coaching behaviours which should be covered in the training of managers.

A half day of training or an hour or two included in a managerial training course will not suffice for all this subject matter. The matter of a manager's own career and those of their staff demands time to study, debate, learn, practise and apply.

Boss as referral agent: The following are clues that should prompt a line manager to refer the employee to a counselling resource either within the organisation or external to it:

- When the manager finds they are dealing with personal or domestic problems rather than work competence difficulties
- There is a desire for the employee to develop problem-solving abilities of their own
- There are special difficulties in handling 'blocks'; that is, when the employee cannot verbalise the problem
- The manager is apprehensive about how to deal with the emotional pain the discussion may uncover

While there is often a perception of risk involved in allowing employees to resolve problems of this nature in the company of a person other than their manager, it is a better way of fulfilling the 'contract' implied in the manager-staff relationship. The risk involved is less than that of incurring inappropriate outcomes, for which the manager may be measured and held accountable. Considered referral to a counselling resource is not an abdication of responsibility. It is a sensible way to carry out the responsibility of managing others.

Figure 26

DIVERSITY OF A MANAGERS' COACHING ROLES

The Manager as Assessor

- Assessing and identifying career values, interests and preferred skills
- Giving feedback on observed behaviours and demonstrated skills and talents

The Manager as Information Provider

- Informing employees about options, opportunities and barriers
- Giving employees printed information

The Manager as Referral Agent

- Referring employees to other people and departments for assistance

The Manager as Guide

- Encouraging employees to focus on available and attainable goals
- Giving employees reality feedback on the appropriateness of selected goals

The Manager as Coach

- Tutoring employees to write career strategy plans
- Coaching employees through all steps of the career strategy plan
- Coaching employees to implement career strategy plans

The Manager as Developer

- Assigning employees to developmental tasks
- Recognising employee readiness for promotion

Job clarity analysis: A key career coaching role of a manager is to clarify what is expected from their staff. Career management effectiveness can be considerably increased when each employee:

- Has a clear understanding of the role of their work unit in the organisation. This means knowing the results for which the person is responsible
- Understands and is committed to their role within the work unit
- Has a specific, measurable and time-scheduled set of objectives
- Has help with identifying obstacles to the achievement of objectives
- Receives regular and open feedback concerning performance and progress towards objectives
- Receives recognition and rewards commensurate with achievements

Two key documents are used in most organisations to assist the achievement of the above—job descriptions and performance appraisal reports.

Unfortunately, too many job descriptions do only what their name implies—describe a job. These often voluminous accounts of what an individual is expected to do rarely define the measurable results for which the individual is accountable. Often they are out-of-date documents which are not contributing essential criteria for the person's career progress and the employer's efficiency.

A manager should regularly review the current job description with their staff. They should examine it for any ambiguity and against their standards for job clarity and seek agreement where a revision to the contents would help each other and the organisation. Clarifying job duties and performance expectations removes a major source of career discontent.

> ☛ *Anything at work which blocks an employee from successful living and affects their performance of assigned job tasks is a matter where the support and advice of another is needed.*

Preparation for coaching discussion: To help clarify what the expected outcomes of a coaching discussion will be, it is useful to provide the employee involved with a brief in advance, such as the following example:

- Consider one of the several career development needs you have which requires assistance from your manager in order to obtain it. Rehearse your case for securing this assistance
- Remember that a career discussion most satisfying to you and your manager will likely result from discussions focused around specific career concerns and plans which you have systematically analysed
- Consider giving your manager an outline in writing of your need in advance of the discussion. This action will minimise surprise and demonstrates consideration for your manager and the need for that person to prepare their response
- Before the discussion takes place, think about the following: What can my manager realistically do for me? What will I do if my manager talks about issues other than the career action on my agenda for this meeting? What can I do if my manager says no help can be given, or lacks sufficient authority to help me?

Career coaching outcomes: There can be many outcomes from career coaching discussions: a new job within the current department or work unit, a new job in a different department, or increased self-understanding of personal career development responsibilities. The employee may realise that they are, in fact, doing a job they like, or gain an increased awareness of their skills and preferences. Often a manager can be useful in helping the employee to make a decision between two career direction options, or give advice on how to develop contacts to gain useful information. A manager can be very supportive when endorsement for enrolment in a relevant skills development training activity is provided.

A manager has a key role to play in an organisation's need for succession planning. This is the business process which identifies current and future potential positions required to carry out the organisation's plans. It also identifies the requirements of successful performance in the position in terms of skills, attributes and experience. Through career coaching discussions a manager can identify candidates from among their staff who can be provided with development experiences and prepared for such positions based on their assessment of the following factors:

- Career motivation
- Current and past performance
- Demonstrated skills and competencies
- Degree of readiness

It is during this process of assessment for succession planning that employees can gain insights into the future direction of the organisation and increased visibility of job opportunities that are or will be available. The bonus for the employee is often increased motivation to work at expanding their self-awareness, to take more responsibility for their on-going self-development and to keep their development and career plan current and communicated.

In addition to focusing on the identification and development of successors for key positions, a manager needs to pay attention to the long term development of members of their staff. Development is, indeed, a long-term process, involving careful attention to the assignments employees are given and the relationships they develop. Regular career coaching discussions are useful to nurture perceived talent early enough to allow for multiple assignments which might cross organisational and/or cross-functional areas of the operations in order to increase the capabilities of those identified for this degree of attention. Where executive management becomes aware of the attention being paid to the development actions that a manager provides for their staff, this can benefit the manager's career progress also.

In 1993 Readers Digest worldwide has initiated within their professional development program comprehensive help to their managers in this important coaching role. They are committed to creating an environment in which employees can manage and pursue their professional development effectively and systematically. Readers Digest believes that the coaching support efforts of managers are necessary to maintain a highly competitive and skilled workforce and closely link these to their business objectives. It states that the responsibilities of the employee, manager and company complement one another to support the professional development philosophy, and it has published internally statements of expectations from employees and from managers and has outlined what the company will do to support them.

Value and Art of Mentoring

The term 'networking' is a synonym of this decade for what has existed in many forms for men and women for centuries. In essence, it is a procedure for establishing connections, securing information, and making problem-solving bridges out of shared experiences. It's a process, not an end in itself. It's through networking that an employee identifies and secures the assistance of a mentor The need for gathering information through consultation with another, which is the process of mentoring, is critical for an employee intent on being more in charge of their worklife direction.

Value of a mentor: While busy solving a series of problems or carrying out the responsibilities of a job, it is difficult for employees to observe themselves and evaluate their performance objectively. What might appear to them to be correct behaviour for their career progress may not be compatible with the views or expectations of management. Their efforts in one direction when viewed in the totality of their overall career goals may be just treading water rather than a contribution to their personal advancement and inner well-being.

When working hard to advance a career, the need often arises for employees to have someone to talk with about their feelings and behaviour. In most cases, they would feel inhibited talking to their boss because of a natural reluctance to share too much of themselves with a person who represents the power to advance or suppress their career ambitions.

Employees often need help from someone else to bring out their best performance, a person with whom they can share their hopes and disappointments in an unfettered way and who can review the proposed next step in their personal career management program. I have often seen people who have resigned from their employer for emotional reasons rather than this decision having been prompted by a calm, structured evaluation of their situation. A mentor can prevent impulse overruling logic.

The mentor an employee selects should be a person they can trust—someone with whom they can be open and who is willing to be frank. The employee should seek another person who will help them manage their own career rather than leaving it to chance.

Figure 27

A MENTOR HELPS ANOTHER PERSON

- Assess the reality of their career potential
- Test out plans and strategies before they take action
- Make use of information networks and resources
- Initiate appropriate career actions
- During a crisis period or turning point in their career
- By providing a confidential refuge for discussing career-related dilemma
- By committing to advise with sensitivity

There can be many types of mentors: a guide to the culture of an organisation, giving information about company values, politics and informal networks; an adviser to help reduce anxiety, through sharing their own experience and perspective on worklife experiences; a teacher of business or technical expertise; or a mentor who provides a behavioural model or an example of the ways significant career actions steps can be accomplished. The relationship with a mentor goes through several stages and Figure 28 indicates these.

Figure 28

MENTOR RELATIONSHIP STAGES

1. Initiation of contact and getting to know each other.
2. Exploring the nature of the relationship and topics for discussion.
3. Testing the strengths and limits of the relationship to see what reactions follow.
4. Stabilisation of the relationship as each settles for what they can expect from each other.
5. Changes in information and counselling needs cause reassessment of the relationship and, sometimes, its termination.

Help with transitions: An appropriate mentor for an employee is someone to whom they feel drawn and from whom they can learn. When an individual is faced with a decision concerning their career and behaviour at work, they are commencing a new transition. A transition requires them to identify the options, select one appropriate to their particular circumstances and move purposely to implement the steps to bring the transition to a successful conclusion. They may need to change mentors when the nature of the career transition differs. A person able to advise them on one issue may not be suitable for a different transition.

A good mentor will help an employee to see not only the options and tasks ahead but also the broader context that gives those tasks meaning. Having a mentor is not a passive process of just listening to advice. The employee needs to question, debate, submit proposals and prepare for discussions with the mentor. Unless the employee does this, the mentor cannot help with three distinct types of assistance. These are to support, to challenge and to provide vision.

Mentor's support, challenge and vision: While supporting an individual, a mentor shows that they have empathy with the person's problem and personal situation. They listen, inspire trust over what is being shared and help define the boundaries within which decisions are to be made. Their role as challengers to the person's ideas is to introduce contradictory views, question the basis of the opinions expressed and the perspective given to the problem. They may sometimes decline to answer questions directly in the best interests of helping the person.

A good mentor is not there to provide the answers but to assist an individual to develop their skills at resolving career-related complications. To demand 'Which way should I go?' is improper use of a mentor relationship.

As a relationship is developing with the mentor, the checklist in Figure 29 to expectations of their behaviour can be useful.

Figure 29

A GOOD MENTOR PROVIDES:

Support by

- Listening
- Providing structure
- Expressing positive expectations—assisting self-confidence
- Serving as an advocate—sometimes talking with others on employee's behalf
- Sharing information about themselves
- Making it special—the relationship is one that both people value highly

Challenge by

- Setting tasks—so that employee gains insight from carrying them out
- Engaging in discussion—talking so that different ways of viewing a problem emerge
- Providing opposite perspectives—so that employee considers each perspective and evaluates many aspects before deciding on an option
- Setting high standards—helping construct positive, self-fulfilling prophesies, aims and expectations which are high, but achievable, even though with difficulty

Vision by

- Modelling—by this is meant providing a description of what employee is trying to become
- Describing a map—helping to form a comprehensive picture of employee's present life and articulate and plan for accomplishment of reasonable and attainable life goals
- Providing a mirror—extending employee's self-awareness, to see themselves in new ways

Mentors' limitations and misunderstandings: Whether the relationship with the mentor is short or lasts a long time, it should never be one of dependency. It is a relationship for mutual planning and mutual negotiation. As both people focus on one or more worklife problems raised, the mentor advises and makes recommendations. The employee should not, however, abdicate responsibility for making their own resolutions and deciding to act in their own particular way. It's their worklife. It's they who must implement the decisions. The mentor suggests, checks their reasoning and provides encouragement.

It is not essential for both to have similar personalities and backgrounds for a mentor relationship to be successful. But if they share similar values, attitudes and sometimes spiritual views the relationship is likely to be more effective. The aim should not be for the employee to please, but to learn from the mentor; not to avoid questions, but to ask them; not to hide mistakes, but to discuss what can be learned from them; not to conceal information, but to share it; not to be protected, but to be encouraged to take new risks.

Choosing the timing for a mentor relationship is the individual's responsibility. It is likely to occur during the major transitions in worklife, such as the stages illustrated in Figure 30. The process of mentoring may involve quite different needs at different stages and therefore necessitate different mentors. Consequently, there can be many sources of mentoring help, and this help may be found either inside or outside the person's place of employment.

Figure 30

CAREER STAGES WHERE MENTORS ARE USEFUL

Career Awareness Stage

Support and information needs

You may be about to:

- Choose an educational institution for study
- Accept a new job offer
- Establish a small business
- Change careers or relocate

Mentors can help you consider the realities ahead so that an informed selection can be made.

Source of mentors

Tertiary education lecturers, former students, employment agency consultants, small business advisory service, career counsellors, chambers of commerce.

Career Preparation Stage

Support and information needs

You have selected your career transition direction. Adjusting to new learning and new environments is often difficult. A mentor can help you to:

- Assess tutoring, counselling services or more experienced students (**as a student**)
- Find out information about the employer which cannot be learned by carrying out job tasks (**as a new employee**)

Source of mentors

Personnel staff, designated mentors provided by the employer, work colleagues, your manager.

Career Orientation Stage

Support and information needs

Making the transition into meaningful work and securing the cooperation of work colleagues requires intuitive solutions to immediate problems. To become competent you need to do more than apply your knowledge to the job. You must earn the right to feel welcomed and respected. Mentors can assist your understanding of the employer's culture, the norms of behaviour, and how to obtain help from others.

Source of mentors

Professional associations, human resource personnel, employees with longer service.

Career Expansion Stage

Support and information needs

At intervals you should consider your career path options. Frequently the scarcity of information restricts a comprehensive evaluation of alternatives. Mentors can help provide this information or recommend sources where it can be found. Their advice can facilitate:

- Preparation of your plans for self-development
- Expansion of your talent
- Improvement of your eligibility for consideration

Source of mentors

Subject area interest groups, proven professionals, acquaintances in the same industry.

Career Advancement Stage

Support and information needs

You need to determine how and to whom you should present your case for what you seek and why you merit it. Those who have traversed this career stage represent the best source of mentors with whom to discuss strategies, documentation and communication methods. You seek their counsel for a specified utilitarian purpose.

Source of mentors

Your manager, personnel staff, senior members of your profession who work for other employers, successful role models, executives, institutes of management.

Employer-Initiated Mentor Programs

The growing recognition of the value of mentoring has prompted many organisations to introduce formal mentoring programs. There have been varying results—not all satisfactory. Some of the lessons from less than satisfactory programs are:

- Equality of access to the developmental benefits of mentoring should be ensured—assigning mentors to recruits only is discriminatory and will be regarded as such by other employees
- A formal mentor program usually has a shortage of suitable mentors—there are likely to be more potential seekers of such a relationship than quality people on stand-by
- Naturally occurring mentoring relationships function better—a cadre of mentors can be advertised as being available to employees and the latter make their own selection and approaches
- Not everybody needs a mentor—enforced relationships rarely work out
- Confidentiality is the main concern of employees—a natural selection will work better on this basis
- Mentors should be volunteers, receive training and have a facility for sharing their experiences without revealing personal situations of those they have advised

Forms of employer-initiated mentoring programs do have value and research through literature recommended in the bibliography will assist the design of such programs and the avoidance of pitfalls other organisations have experienced.

Standards of mentors: The radical changes occurring in employment life in turn demand greater skill and knowledge levels of those who act as mentors to others. Those who aspire to such roles may need training in how to generate in others a desire to learn, how to advocate optimum choices, and how to recognise valid emotional issues that impede or fuel forward planning in adults of different ages. The mentors' knowledge base could usefully include expertise in adult developmental psychology, a thorough grounding in skills for processing in-depth issues faced by human beings, and an in-depth knowledge of themselves. A working knowledge of health and exercise planning, of financial planning and of planning for retirement, may also be required from time to time. A mentor should, ideally, possess leadership skills that equip them to inspire others to manage their lives and to reach out for high levels of personal impact within their spheres of influence. The assumption of the role of mentor is, therefore, not to be taken lightly. It is likely to demand a new set of learning by the aspiring mentor and a challenge to the human resources function in how to select and train those in their employ who they wish to appoint as mentors.

5 Workshops & Workbooks

Types of Career Development Workshop

In career development training there are two distinct phases, though they are interconnected. The first is teaching employees about how to acquire information and decide on a career and/or life management action step(s), i.e. exploring self and one's options. The second is studying, selecting and practising the strategies and skills necessary for implementing the decision, i.e. making the transition and achieving the desired results. Sorting out a decision about a career action step is a complicated task for an employee, whatever the issue of concern.

For this reason, to conduct one workshop as a learning event to help employees achieve both these outcomes is inappropriate, impractical and endangers the ability to sustain support for career development training. In addition to the fact that there are two distinct phases of learning, participants need time to reflect, explore, discuss and process new knowledge about self and their employment environment. Hence, two learning events some weeks apart is the effective and intelligent way to design such events. This recommendation can be made clearer by considering the tuition topics relevant to each of the two phases.

In Figures 31 and 32, the two types of workshops are illustrated.

Learning experience: The important thing to be stressed to participants is that reading about and thinking about career development are not the same as **doing** it. A person who lets other people or 'the system' make the decision about their career is not going to have much influence on how it turns out. Such people are the most likely to be dissatisfied with the results. A person who actively seeks participation in a career development workshop is eager to learn how to feel more in charge of their career direction.

Figure 31

CAREER OPTIONS TRAINING

Who Am I Today ?

How to identify what I want from work

Learning career analysis methods

Carrying out a thorough work and life management review

Where Do I Want to Go?

Identifying career path options

Networking for career information

Developing career plans, goals, timetables for realistic options

How Will I Make a Decision?

Evaluating alternatives and carrying out reality testing

Learning how to decide between options

Selecting a mentor, sponsor and coach

How Will I Get There?

Using career support facilities provided by employer

Preparing self-development action and request plans

Negotiating with those who have the power to help

Workshops are purposeful learning experiences. Each workshop should facilitate learning for a particular group of participants. There are, however, several factors that the trainer will want to think about as they plan to help others take charge of the controllable things in their lives and careers. The trainer needs to consider the following factors:

- The material aspects of the workshop, including publicity and physical arrangements
- The purposes and desired outcomes of the workshop
- How to introduce the workshop to the participants

Figure 32

CAREER TRANSITION TRAINING FOR POSITION WITH CURRENT EMPLOYER

Evaluating Your Current Situation

Reducing career future uncertainty

Extending awareness of transferable skills

Learning the nineteen skills of career transition*

Identifying Alternative Job Search Strategies

Conducting research/information interviews

Preparing submissions on what you seek and why you merit it

Acquiring a mentor, a coach, a sponsor

Promoting Yourself Effectively

Producing a career plan document

Drafting and re-drafting your résumé

Techniques for self-marketing

Successful Interview Behaviour

Preparing mind, speech and clothes

Negotiating new job conditions

Rehearsing difficult interview questions

Coping with Transition Period

Managing relationships with work colleagues

Managing negative stress

Managing networks, family, friends during transition

* Refer to *Are You Really Ready to Job Hunt?* (1992 publication from Worklife)

- Establishment of a climate for self-directed learning
- The overall design of the workshop
- Tuition components of the workshop
- Selection and availability of learning aids, such as diagnostic instruments, self-learning designs, handouts, workbooks, overheads, videos, group topic discussion exercises
- Desirable maximum number of participants per workshop (recommended to be no more than 12)
- Voluntary participation or compulsory or by invitation (the first is recommended)
- To be offered wholly or partly in company time
- Workshops of various lengths

Single session workshops: It is easier to create continuity in a workshop that runs for a single session or one day. Yet the very nature of career development training makes single session or one day workshops an inappropriate design. The tuition for both career options and career transition is complex and better results are attained when participants complete homework assignments relevant to their individual career issues between sessions.

Multiple session workshops: Workshops of various lengths can be conducted in multiple sessions over a period of days or several weeks. Frequently, this type of scheduling is necessary in order to allow participants to attend without taking inconvenient periods of time off from their jobs. An advantage of multiple session workshops is that this allows time for the participants to reflect on what they have learned and to complete 'homework' assignments that can serve as useful preparation for the next session.

A multiple session format also creates opportunities for the participants to apply their learning outside the training room. It allows them to report successes and failures in a supportive workshop environment and to receive encouragement and advice from others.

A suggested format for multiple session career development training designed by Richard L. Knowdell of Career Research and Testing Inc. (US-based career development expert and trainer) which I have adapted follows in Figure 33.

Figure 33

SCHEDULE FOR MULTIPLE SESSION CAREER DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Time Interval	Career Activity	Process
Week 1	2.5 hour Briefing Meeting	DEVELOPMENT PHASE • Invite participants • Influence **voluntary** participation in training
Week 2	Day I Workshop * Interpret and Review Data	SELF-ASSESSMENT • Skills • Values • Interests • Personal style • Preferred work environment
Week 3	Day II Workshop * Field Research	OPPORTUNITY AWARENESS (Exploration) • Identify 5 options • Field research
Week 4	Day III Workshop * Planning	DECISION MAKING (Focus) • Best match • Realistic goal
Week 5	1 - 1.5 hour Individual Counselling Session with Trainer	DEVELOP PERSONAL STRATEGY • What? • Why? • How? • When? • Who?
Week 6	Day IV Workshop * Implementation of Career Action Steps	PRESENTATION OF PERSONAL PLANS • Career strategy • Further help required

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* Self-Managed Activity which requires a commitment from individual to devote 16 hours' activity overall spread **between** workshops.

Workshop Content

Career options workshops: The most effective workshop design helps individuals analyse their interests, values, goals and capabilities; consider their options; make decisions relating to their current job; and establish personal development plans that are likely to bring the results they deserve through their efforts.

Appropriate activities are presented by the trainer to promote individual and interactive learning. Structured exercises, individual and small group tasks, skill-teaching demonstrations, worksheets and workbooks and role playing are used.

The training material selected for the workshop should teach participants that career planning and development is, and should remain, the individual's responsibility, but should also guide participants in how best to achieve this, both individually and with the assistance of others.

There should be a minimum of four outputs from each participant:

- Conclusions about the person's capabilities, interests, aspirations and objectives = Life Planning
- Targets for future job assignments and development activities to make that progress happen = Development Planning
- Recorded goals and plans, task priorities and reward expectations from current job = Performance Planning
- Sharing benefits of their career actions which should benefit the organisation = Organisation Development

Individuals need to be helped to consider each of these so that their day-to-day work activities fit in with an overall career plan which, in turn, is consistent with personal feelings and realistic expectations about worklife. Each participant is helped to link short-term and long-term thinking about careers so that personal growth and worklife well-being is achieved and sustained.

The content should encourage participants of all ages to assess themselves thoroughly and set personal development goals and plans. The group setting should foster interaction, a sense of safety in sharing personal information and mutual help among participants.

Content design should include helping the participants to:

- Increase their knowledge about how to influence their own career and rely less on their employer to initiate desired actions for their progress
- Gain significant improvement in personal skills in career analysis, planning and goal setting
- Learn to do their own career development and deal with controllable career issues themselves
- Learn more about their employer and the opportunities within the organisation
- Develop realistic career plans and personal preparation programs
- Communicate to others what they seek and why they merit it
- Identify all their skills and capabilities and their relevance to career satisfaction
- Acquire skills—and practise them—in how to implement their career decisions and achieve desired results

Career transition workshops: The content design and sequence of training will differ when internal career transition training is the purpose rather than job seeking for an alternative employer being the objective. In both cases the quest is common: i.e. to raise participants' self-confidence, provide for skills practice, inform about relevant resources, produce usable outputs such as career plans and schedules, completed résumés and interview content plans.

Trainers' preparation: The following are important questions to be answered by those planning a workshop:

- Define your target group. Which groups are going to participate in the workshops?
- What would indicate success a year from now for you, the target group and the organisation?
- What is your implementation plan? budget? evaluation criteria?
- What is your goal statement? E.g. to run five workshops by . . .

It is important to tie career development training to existing policies and procedures; the trainer should:

- Identify existing practices which will support career development in the organisation
- Identify existing practices which might negatively impact career development in the organisation and community
- Identify areas where new policies may be needed

It is critical to the success of career training for the trainer to be clear about the existing support or lack of support. Under three columns labelled For, Against, Persuadable, it is useful to list names of people in the organisation. The trainer should define ways to capitalise on the 'for', 'against' and 'persuadable' list to minimise the hindrance and specify the next three action steps to improve the situation.

It is important for workshop trainers to obtain the support of managers for many reasons, one of which is that participants are likely to proceed to career review discussions with their manager following workshop attendance. It is best that managers are not surprised by this occurrence.

Communication: All relevant managers should be informed about workshops and their content before they occur so that they can ask questions and clarify procedures. Subsequently, the workshop should be communicated widely, so that all employees know that it is available and what is involved.

In defining the purposes of a workshop to the target group of participants, it is important to stress the part that they will play in their own learning. Some of the ways in which the purposes of a career workshop might be described to potential attendees are as follows:

- To help you to learn about yourself and the way you view and feel about your life at work
- To help you to cope with changes within yourself, in your job and in other facets of your life
- To allow you to practise a process of self-directed enquiry as a means to obtaining better answers to your own questions

- To help you to discover your options and generate realistic alternatives from the information that you develop about yourself and your career

A trainer may wish to stress that in pursuing these purposes, participants can learn valuable skills, including learning how and what to learn. In defining the skills to be gained from the workshop, they should consider including the following points:

- To learn what you can and want to do
- To express what has personal meaning and value for you in your job and career
- To track or anticipate external changes that may have an impact on the quality of your life
- To discover various ways in which to make the contribution that you want to make; to realise what needs to be done
- To master the anxieties that accompany change and the process of making choices
- To renew yourself and to avoid personal obsolescence; to be a self-directed learner

Pre-workshop: The participant should understand why they are attending the workshop and what benefits their manager and employer expects from it. What skills will be learned? Will the workshop help the person do their present job better or is the person being prepared for a promotion or transfer? What parts of the workshop should the participant expect to be most relevant and interesting?

Line managers need to ensure the participant has the opportunity to apply the new skills when back on the job or else they may be forgotten or neglected and a cynical attitude develop.

The convenience, or inconvenience, of being away from one's job may be important to many participants. Worry about what is or isn't happening back at work will reduce the participant's attention and so detract from the value they gain from a workshop. Managers should ensure that people they send to workshops don't have this worry.

During the workshop: At this stage, the value of the workshop is largely up to the participants and the trainer. Managers can ensure that interruptions are minimised, however participants will derive most from a workshop if they:

- Make honest assessments about the knowledge and skills they have and those that they need to develop
- Accept new ideas, or at least are open to them, and question the ideas, beliefs and attitudes they already hold
- Take a 'helicopter' view, that is, stand back from day-to-day responsibilities and take a broader view. The workshop will enable participants to become more effective in their jobs if they can develop a broader view of how their own job fits into the aims of their organisation as a whole
- Ask questions — workshops are enhanced if all participants are prepared to share their experiences and viewpoints rather than leave all the responsibility for making the workshop interesting to the trainer and a few vocal participants

Introductory session: Whatever training format is selected, the trainer should ensure that the following are covered in the first session:

- Workshop objectives are introduced and clarified
- Program details are discussed, thereby providing an overview of the workshop activities
- 'Housekeeping rules' are explained, and facilities and
- Establish what expectations each participant brings to the workshop

The essential participative nature of successful career training needs to be facilitated from the beginning of the workshop. An exercise along the lines of the one that follows in Figure 34 enables participants to become involved and sets the pattern for what will follow.

Figure 34

INTERACTIVE EXERCISE: REDUCING CAREER FUTURE UNCERTAINTY

Form groups of three. First, by yourself, write your responses to the following:

As you think of doing your own career planning, complete the sentence "I am concerned about . . . "

As you think of doing your own career planning, complete the sentence "I expect to . . . "

If you could get the answer to only one "How do I . . . ?" question about dealing with your career, what would that question be?

Within your group discuss each other's responses. Contribute your ideas as to how each member of the group can help themselves to reduce their uncertainty about their career future. Record points to be raised with the trainer where more assistance is required.

Post-workshop: Participants need to discuss the workshop, its outcomes and their plans for executing what they have learned soon after they return to work. If a backlog has developed during a person's absence, the manager's support will be necessary to ensure the means are available to help the person cope. Otherwise the person could lose the inspiration, time and energy to implement the new skills acquired. This could be demoralising. If supervisors are not made aware of problems, such as backlogs, they could begin to doubt the value of sending people on workshops.

Workshops are a popular method of training employees in personal career management responsibility. The advantages and difficulties of this form of career development support is summarised in Figure 35.

Figure 35

CAREER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Advantages	**Difficulties**
When offered during scheduled working hours, helps participants take time to do career planning	The logistics and costs of convening participants can be expensive
Useful for communicating the culture and objectives of the employer	Important choices and judgments are rarely made during one training session; the choice process requires a span of time
Interaction with others can be fun; working with others during a scheduled time period increases the chance of completing the task	Some of the most important life and career-planning skills cannot be learned in a training room; e.g. some self-initiated exploration and reality testing must be done on the job or within the community
Participants can help one another to recall, organise and interpret information	Requires a skilled trainer/ facilitator
Provides access to other participants to facilitate reality testing of career plans and goals	Participants may not be ready or willing to do many of the same things at the same time
Self-exploration and skills building can be initiated and practised in a non-threatening environment	

Workbooks

The growth of interest in personal development and the escalating acceptance that self-help is the practical method for managing careers have been met with the publication of a range of workbooks. Their contents usually require that the individual records their responses to a series of questions covering many aspects of their way of life and employment experiences. These written responses may be made within the workbook or on separate paper. The objective of these workbooks is to improve the self-awareness of the reader and, by the nature of the design, to lead the person to decision making. Many purchase such workbooks and read them without obeying the instructions to record their responses. Consequently, they often view them as being of little help. Such workbooks demand hard work, adequate time to complete, and pauses for reflection between the times applied to this activity.

For successful career planning and decision making, employees need to gather and record considerable data about themselves. This data needs to be organised in ways that enable them to answer questions such as: Who am I ? What can I do? What do I really want to do? How will I achieve this? A workbook carefully chosen from commercial suppliers or custom designed by human resource management staff and/or adult career specialists can facilitate:

- Critical data gathering
- Process of analysis
- Evolution of implementation plans for selected career action steps

A workbook can provide a participant with a structure for self-assessment, a recording medium of total privacy, and the clarity to sort out what really matters and what doesn't. A workbook can also be the foundation on which a workshop is designed and can be issued for the delivery, monitoring and sequence of tuition.

Workbooks can be used in different ways, including:

- As assigned homework for participants during training programs or between counselling meetings
- For pre-workshop preparation prior to attendance, allowing the employee to spend more time on concept extensions
- Dealing with problems specific to an individual

Workbooks can be used to help people discover and accept the need to be aware of what is important to them. Users can share their reactions to their responses in the workbook or the knowledge they have gained without revealing personal information about which they are sensitive.

Custom-Designed Workbooks

Some organisations are engaging consultants to collaborate in the design of structured analyses which can then evolve into a workbook which they publish and issue to their employees. They can be used by employees working alone or as set exercises during career development workshops, or as assigned homework between learning sessions. By issuing a workbook to employees, an organisation demonstrates their concern for people's careers. In the process, they teach employees to take ownership for their own development, and encourage commitment to its success. The completion of workbooks can help an employee improve their preparation for performance appraisal and career progress reviews with their manager.

The complexity of self-assessment and the underlying psychological processes involved require that the design of structured analyses and their associated questionnaires are carried out by informed people who have first-hand experience of the nature of the career transition journey. Otherwise, the publication may fall short of its objectives when used by employees.

Figure 36

VARIETY OF OUTCOMES REPORTED FROM WORKBOOK USE WITHIN A PUBLIC SECTOR DEPARTMENT

- Increased satisfaction with my job
- Redesign of my job to make it valuable to my career and employer's needs
- Increased motivation to work actively in developing my career
- Less satisfaction with my current job
- A realisation that I'm doing what I like
- Increased awareness of the extent of my skills and interests
- Knowledge of career path opportunities
- Clarification of my employer's expectations
- A career action plan and schedule
- Learned how to network and discovered the importance of networks and mentors
- Improved relationship with my boss
- Enrolment in development courses specific to my job and self-improvement needs
- Resignation, as realised I'm not benefiting my employer nor self through staying
- Clarification of what has actually been disturbing me about my worklife
- My self-concept has been clarified and enhanced
- Know more about my employer's career support services
- An improved résumé suitable for internal job applications
- Confidence to negotiate task swapping with colleagues to enrich my job performance
- Understanding who is responsible for what, i.e. employer and me

An organisation gains much from custom designing a workbook for the use of their own employees. There are benefits in this approach for the employees, the career development support staff and the employer. In summary they are:

Benefits for employees:

- Inspires self-help among those with concerns about career issues
- Guarantees their participation—they don't just read the material, they 'do it'
- Helps them to cope with issues that can be handled only by the individual or which the person may prefer to analyse privately
- Employees can consider and make judgments and choices over a period of time
- Facilitates employees being able to focus on what is really important in their worklife
- Enables employees to identify what is their responsibility and what is their employer's responsibility concerning their careers

Benefits for counsellors and/or human resource management staff:

- Helps identify where help is needed for employees
- Useful as prescribed 'homework' between counselling or training sessions
- Time-saving as research, design and validation are already done
- Assists internal redeployment/placement/transfer actions of employees
- Reduces client/employee demands for career development support which are neither appropriate nor adequately justified
- Enables career advice issues to be serviced with higher productivity without loss of quality or support

Benefits for employer:

- Demonstrates employer interest in career development support
- Directs employees to career issues which really matter
- Helps line managers in their career development coaching roles
- Adaptable to specific organisational and industry circumstances

Figure 37

SAMPLE CONTENT OF AN EMPLOYERS' CAREER PLANNER WORKBOOK

Introduction	Page 2
Part One : Analysing Your Situation	
Learning from your experience	6
Types of training and development activities	10
Are you keeping up-to-date?	11
Your constraints	12
Defining your skills and abilities	14
Employee self-assessment questionnaire	15
Identifying your personal development problem	17
Which personal development hazards require your attention?	18
Your employment future	19
What working conditions suit you?	21
Your personal development vision	22
Part Two : Your Information Resources	
Your information or counselling needs	24
Support for your personal development	25
Identifying networks	26
Assistance from your manager	27
Where mentors are useful	28
Identifying mentors	29
Sources of printed information	30

Part Three : Setting Your Personal Development Goals

Why set personal development goals? 32
Defining what you want 33
Analysing your research 36
Career-goal decision making 37
Preparing your career-goal statement 38
The goal-setting process 39
Discussion with your manager 42

Part Four : Planning Your Next Personal Development Action

Obstacles to your proposed personal development action 44
Overcoming obstacles 45
16 tips for handling your personal development effectively 46
Advancing your personal development with the company 48

Part Five : Preparing For Your Transition

Essentials for achieving your next job goal 50
Our position vacancy policy 50
Golden rules for job application writing 51
Checking your personal development action step request 52
Hints on résumé writing 53
Checking over your résumé 54
Interview experience 55
Preparing for position interviews 56
Rehearsing your answers 57
Difficult interview questions 58
Planning your career discussion 59
Your personal development contract 60

Your Personal Development In Summary 61

Figure 38

CAREER WORKBOOKS

Advantages	Difficulties
Emphasises learning through self-initiated exploration and discovery; user can select those sections pertinent to current career issues	Some people, independent of the quality of the workbook content and design, will not take time to tackle their own life/career issues
Can be used alone or as interactive assignments during training attendance; enhances the effectiveness of workshops	Some people will not experiment adequately with a workbook before concluding that they do not need it
As homework can help the individuals cope with issues that can be handled only by the individual, or which the person prefers to analyse privately	Individuals who are afraid to initiate contacts and share their data may fail to extend their own learning boundaries
Reinforces the need to consider and make judgments and choices over a period of time	
Provides a common vocabulary for discussions about the subject issues	
Checklists and surveys can be completed quickly and produce data which is objective	

6 Software, Assessment & Resource Centres

Career Information

Information is essential to a self-help approach to career development support. Basic career information can be established quickly within an organisation. Information that already exists within the organisation, but is dispersed throughout many locations—cupboards, past newsletters, filing systems and libraries—can be collated into facilities which employees can readily access. Additional texts, workbooks, audio cassettes and videos, work stations, computer facilities, organisational chart files, job description folders, study skill aids, stress management materials, training course information, display and bulletin boards, posters, and a newsletter can be added according to need and organisational policy and budget. The best way to design an information facility is to organise it so that it requires self-help by the user and demands little time commitment from supervising staff.

A good strategy is to build career support information gradually, starting with charts that show job titles in each function by organisational level. Salary level or grade need not be used, because the purpose initially is to identify only the possible job opportunities. To back up such a chart, publish brief descriptions of the content of and qualifications for each job. Later, refinements may be made. For example, job titles can be grouped into **'families'** of **similar jobs** and possible job progression lines (career paths) can be drawn.

Career resource centres: This career development support service places emphasis on self-help actions by employees and can be created with low material and labour costs. The scope of such centres can range from a section of an in-house library allocated to career materials to a stand-alone walk-in facility containing printed material, on-line databases, software, audio and video resources and sometimes on-call, or part-time or full-time counselling staff. Good results that are cost effective can be obtained when centres are administered in such a way that no continual on-site supervision is necessary. They can be created to help employees make career, life management and educational decisions and include materials on self-assessment, assertiveness, stress management, and decision making and study skills, alongside items on career pathing information about occupations and employment.

Whatever their dimensions, career resource centres should be user friendly, readily accessible, quiet and clearly sign posted. They can be designed to meet the wide range of employee needs and materials can be selected to encourage total or selective access.

The measure of success of such centres is the user's ability to advance the resolution of their career issues whether associated with current job enrichment, personal development, redeployment, relocation or redundancy. The contents should be selected and presented in such a way that they teach skills, strategies and career management techniques while addressing the emotional factors surrounding an employee's career problem dilemma.

There is no formula for creating the perfect centre. Defining who are the potential users—the customers—is the key to a cost effective service. Some centres will focus on catering for professional staff, others for production personnel. Some will serve the needs of diverse ethnic groups, while others serve homogeneous employee populations. The goal is to enable your employees to develop a sense of control of their situations and to feel that the resources in the centre have assisted them.

Better results are obtained when the creation of the centre is based on modest goals in the initial phase of implementation and more elaborate facilities and stock are included later. The expansion of resources in such centres will depend on user rate and satisfaction levels, budgetary considerations and the rapidly growing range of new technology and printed materials relating to career development and adult life journeys.

Special services: The inclusion of reference material, self-assessment aids, and often software to help employees are core services. Once a centre is established, the service can be extended to include, for example:

- Venue for orientation, or induction, programs for recruits
- Location for facilitating focus group discussions on common concerns, problems or issues during career problem solving

- Base for providing services to remote location or interstate based staff
- Evaluation sessions which debrief users and collects feedback on degrees of usefulness of resources
- Facility for self-help groups either from your employee population or extended as a community service and corporate image gesture to appropriate people not employed by the organisation
- Venue for workshops on personal career planning, training managers as career coaches, executive briefing sessions on usage, observation of outcomes and plans for changes
- Extension of access to members of employee's families.

A career information centre does not function as well when located within an existing library, or personnel department. It needs to be prominent, easily located, accessed with ease, well publicised and attractive and orderly in appearance.

Planning considerations for a career resource centre involve clarifying the purpose and objectives for establishing the centre, defining the likely users, developing a policy and procedure to reduce likelihood of confusion or conflict over use, choosing a location, preparing an operational and materials acquisition budget, selecting furniture and equipment, attracting users by promotional methods, and designing and implementing measurements of the effectiveness of use. Much can be gained by analysing the environment of your particular employer and industry and the occupation range within it to determine the type and extent of information service pertinent for your own potential users.

A career resource centre provides visible evidence to employees that the employer is actively concerned with their career futures. It encourages those who are really concerned about their personal career management, but is not likely to be of value to those who simply complain that their career progress is neglected. The primary purpose is to serve the information needs of employees. It exists to help them make career enhancement and educational planning decisions.

People who have to go: During downsizing, an organisation can utilise their resource centre to assist those being terminated. In most cases this can reduce the amount of services required from an external outplacement provider and thereby the costs. Located on or off site, the centre is a place where terminated employees have access to career transition resources such as:

- Career direction planning materials
- Job search manuals
- Facilities for producing résumés and application letters
- Job listings from other employers
- Career support counselling
- On-line databases of useful information on alternative industries and employers

The centre can be available pre-termination date and also post-termination date according to policy decision. The centre can be a bridge that allows the terminated employee to cross over, so to speak, from the old job to a new job, and frequently to new career growth.

The emphasis of such a service is that the centre is helping the terminated employee with their future, not their past. Hostility is likely to be less as a consequence. The terminating employer is visibly supporting the employee's activities to create their future. Those employees remaining will notice this service for departing colleagues with reassurance and a new respect for their employer.

Design experiences: I have been privileged to be involved in the design and selection of resources for many centres in both private and public sector environments. It is my view that career resource centres are the key cost-effective support service in advancing the knowledge of people to plan for and make satisfactory career and life management changes plan. People who are concerned by change, and eager to gain a greater sense of confidence about their future working life will use them eagerly and through them can be helped to see how their skills may be extended, developed or applied in a better, more beneficial way.

The basis of thinking behind these centres is this: the more influence that people have over their own careers, the more they will enjoy increased job satisfaction, better security and higher productivity. The emphasis is on facilitating learning and self-improvement for those who ask:

- Who am I?
- How am I seen?

- What are my options?
- How can I achieve my goals?

The role of the centres can be formally described as:

- The promotion of career planning, retraining and voluntary mobility amongst employees and potentially surplus people
- The promotion of the concept that modern careers involve change, ongoing training and personal responsibility
- The provision of resources to assist employees and organisations with their career planning and management responsibilities
- The facilitation of constructive workforce mobility
- The promotion of the concept that career development support and personal development are positive ongoing activities

Computer-based Career Support

In recent years the process of self-assessment, exploring options and making choices has been helped by the development and usage of computer-based career support systems. Many private and public sector employers are purchasing this software and supporting such facilities in order to assist their employees make considered job enrichment, transfer, promotion or retraining decisions. A trend in personnel policy is to deliver its services to employees directly through computer terminals located at their work stations. Electronic delivery of career support can be a cost effective solution where human resource personnel are reduced in numbers and as well it can serve multi-site workplaces through the use of existing networks. Computer-based career support delivered in this manner is a realistic option in cases where the software has been designed for networked delivery.

A highly respected professional colleague of mine, Dr Deborah Bloch, has examined the relationship between career information and career development by focusing on career knowledge to find an answer to the question of how people acquire and use information. Her research examined two kinds of difficulties in the assimilation of information. The first was that details were often lacking, and these could be details about the world of work. The second was the lack of an appropriate framework on which to place the details.

Deborah concluded some people respond well to gaining this information from computers, others to printed sources, while others learned best by talking. Reference to her research findings is included in the Bibliography. The message for career support planners is that a choice of media from which employees can learn is necessary for an effective service. Computer-based support should not be neglected in this evaluation of alternative media.

There are now available a variety of software programs, from the most simple database of occupation and educational course information to the more complex databases, which include interest, skill, and value measurement and advice segments, career planning and so on. Some include tuition in the implementation phase of career decision making such as job seeking techniques and documentation such as résumé compilation. The former are termed computer-based **information** delivery systems (CIDS) and the latter computer-based career **guidance** systems (CBGS).

Some software systems are imported from overseas and adapted for local situations; others are designed and developed within Australia. These systems have such names as Sigi Plus, Discover, JIIG-CAL, Career Builder, Career Focus and New Directions.

The attraction of such systems lies in their capacity to store and retrieve large amounts of information and, in some of them, to educate the user whilst providing information-access capabilities. But enthusiasm to install such systems must be tempered with considerations such as the following: What is really required within a particular employment environment? Is this the most effective way for intended users to acquire this help? Which system features your preferred approach to career support? From where can it be obtained? (See Figure 39) What is the record of user satisfaction with it? As with other features of career development support, thoroughness in the evaluation phase will lead to better results.

But a word of caution. Do check that the procedure for usage does include the intervention of a career counsellor as well as requiring the employee to interact with the computerised system on their own. In other words, ensure that the employee does have an opportunity to discuss the process at different stages of using the software. Stand-alone systems where no counsellor intervention is involved produce less satisfactory outcomes.

Figure 39

A: COMPUTER-BASED CAREER GUIDANCE SYSTEMS (CBGS) IN AUSTRALIA—1993

Title	Source	IBM / Apple
DISCOVER	The Centre for Worklife Counselling	IBM / Mac
JIIG-CAL	JIIG-CAL Australia	IBM
SIGI 2.0	ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research)	IBM
CAREER FOCUS	Career Focus	IBM
CAREER BUILDER (Career Exploration)	Career Solutions	IBM
CAREER MATE (Career Guidance & Counselling)	Career Solutions	IBM
NEW DIRECTIONS (Organisation & Rehabilitation Providers)	Career Solutions	IBM

B: CAREER INFORMATION DELIVERY SYSTEMS (CIDS) IN AUSTRALIA—1993

Title	Source	IBM / Apple
JAC (NSW)	Department of Industrial Relations Employment, Training and Further Education	IBM
CAREER QUEST (NSW)	Your Student Adviser	IBM / Mac / Apple
CAREER LINK (NSW)	Your Student Adviser	CD-ROM/ Mac
NEW HORIZONS	Lifesearch Australia	IBM
SISCL (Referencing System for Careers Centres / Libraries)	Swinburne Institute of Technology	IBM

CBGS Software

To illustrate what CBGS software can provide, here is a description of the DISCOVER system.

The design of DISCOVER takes a structured career planning approach in supporting the employee. The four DISCOVER software modules within the system provide an in-depth service for the employee, covering the essential steps in the career development process outlined in Figure 40.

Self-awareness is the first step in effective career development. DISCOVER's interactive activities help users identify and prioritise their interests, abilities, work-related values and job preferences in an on-line environment.

People planning a career transition need to know what occupational opportunities are available to them. DISCOVER provides a responsive, concise source of detailed information about a broad range of occupations in the community at large, as well as specific opportunities available within the employers' organisation.

Developing specific plans for career transition is another essential part of the career development process. DISCOVER helps users to establish goals and plan in detail for their accomplishment. DISCOVER also helps people identify ways to develop skills for success in their current or prospective positions, through education and training programs.

DISCOVER can also be an effective tool for employees who need easy access to specific human resource management information. Using this direct access menu-led option, employees are taken directly to detailed data files on:

- Up to ten topics customised for the organisation; for example, personnel policy and procedures, further career-related information sources, key contact people and career paths
- Descriptions of positions/functions in the organisation
- Vocational/technical schools, undergraduate courses, graduate schools and institutions with distance education programs available throughout Australia
- Occupations outside the organisation

Figure 40

DISCOVER FOR ORGANISATIONS
SOFTWARE SYSTEM CONTENT OUTLINE

Module 1—Reviewing and Organising What Employee Knows About Self

- Assesses general interests
- Collects self-ratings of general and job-related skills / competencies
- Assesses work-related values
- Assesses job preferences

Module 2—Learning About Jobs and Your Organisation

- Provides relevant career support and job information specific to your organisation
- Suggests and describes occupations directly related to the employee's interests, skills and job preferences

Module 3—Identifying Options and Making Plans

- Describes various career options, including job enrichment, retirement planning, lateral movement and promotion
- Provides a process for selecting the most realistic option(s)
- Assists in developing an action plan to implement successfully selected career option(s)
- Examines interaction of life/career roles
- Offers suggestions for coping with stress caused by transitions

Module 4—Putting Plans Into Action

- Provides customised details about the full range of training opportunities inside and outside your organisation
- Helps employees improve job-seeking skills, such as résumé writing, interviewing and networking
- Suggests avenues for developing competency in additional areas and in skill formation

Source: Description from ACT Inc., USA & Worklife Pty Ltd, Australia

People who complete this four-step process on DISCOVER leave the system knowing much more about themselves, their career options and their organisation. They will have developed plans for achieving career goals within the context of organisational reality. They will understand that the responsibility for implementing those plans rests mainly on their own shoulders.

The career management approach of the DISCOVER system is very flexible. Each of the four modules of the system is further divided into sections. The entire system is menu-driven, allowing each section to be used independently of other modules and sections of the system. This means that technical support personnel can devise an approach to DISCOVER that meets their unique career needs. For example, people who are undecided about their career direction can benefit from the sequential use of all four modules.

Implementation strategies for DISCOVER: For organisations with decentralised locations, rural locations, shift workers, minimal career development support, or a limited budget, DISCOVER can work very well as a stand-alone system. It is easy to use, comprehensive and in most situations does not necessarily require professional career counselling support, though this can be useful.

DISCOVER can be an effective component in the individual career counselling process. The system becomes an ally to the counsellor by quickly increasing the career knowledge of people to a level which ensures the counsellor's interaction is more productive. Routine activities and self-assessment instruments can easily be completed with DISCOVER. Printouts and assessments can then be brought to counselling sessions for review and discussion.

DISCOVER can be a strong support to career training workshops. Participants can use the system to better prepare themselves for the group or team learning environment. It can increase their awareness of career planning and self-knowledge, thus decreasing the amount of time spent in the workshop. Course time can be devoted to reinforcing the concepts of DISCOVER as well as to a discussion of more specialised and unique issues confronting the participants. Most importantly, DISCOVER can serve as an ongoing source of support and guidance to participants who have completed the training or to people who are unable to attend the workshop at all.

The DISCOVER software includes an authoring system that allows the software supplier to customise for the employer by doing all or some of the following:

- Modify existing text
- Add the name of the organisation to the text
- Add a list of the organisation's position titles, functions or job roles
- Enter detailed descriptions of positions, functions or job roles
- Build a searchable file of training courses, including course descriptions and on-the-job learning experiences
- Insert 'bulletin board' announcements
- Modify or replace evaluation items that are presented to people at sign-off; these can be used in management reports
- Include general information about the organisation such as career paths, occupational forecasts, tuition reimbursement programs and other relevant career development information

DISCOVER software has a built-in evaluation feature so that the employer can monitor how much it is used by people, but not who accesses the system. DISCOVER automatically stores group information about system users and their level of satisfaction with the system. You can generate either of two reports from this information upon request:

- A summary of the participants' responses to the evaluation questions offered at sign-off. The questions may be customised to reflect specific information needs of your company or organisation
- A summary containing characteristics of people who used the direct access approach and a more detailed analysis of which group of people used the career management approach

The strong emphasis on interactive guidance components makes DISCOVER a leader among computer-based career guidance systems.

Examples of other guidance systems, though of a less comprehensive nature than DISCOVER, are:

SIGI PLUS (System of Interactive Guidance and Information): The SIGI PLUS system is almost as highly regarded as DISCOVER, though the software modules are less comprehensive in the degree of guidance options to the user. The emphasis in the collection of data from the user is on the person's values and their relevance to occupational choice. The components encompass both occupational and non-occupational factors and focus on career decision making being a lifelong process. With a substantial number of installations overseas ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research) has thoroughly customised the content for use within Australia.

JIIG-CAL (Job Ideas and Information Generator-Computer Assisted Learning): JIIG-CAL is suitable for people of all ages and ability levels and is usually used in community service or educational environments. Counsellor involvement is strongly recommended by the suppliers to assist the user to apply the generated reports to develop specific career plans.

CAREER BUILDER: CAREER BUILDER is a comprehensive career exploration facility which activates different exploration pathways in response to different age groups and educational backgrounds. Likely compatible industries (about sixty are in the database), career clusters (selection base of three hundred) and occupations (1 000+ adapted from ASCO—Australian Standard Classification of Occupations) are generated after user responds to prompts for information over a thirty minute period. The philosophy underlying the software construct is self-empowerment in decision making.

CIDS Software

An example of CIDS is the CareerLink Software system which helps young people explore their options and find out what it would be like to be in a particular occupation, how to enter or train for that occupation, and where to get more information on the jobs they want to know about. Personality traits are matched with job profiles and recommended occupations from a limited database that best fit the attributes of the user are provided.

In several states in Australia there is information-providing software labelled JAC available for general public access within career reference centres. JAC (Job and Course Explorer) provides information on job duties and tasks (approximately 450), working conditions, personal qualities required for jobs and training and entry requirements, as well as educational course descriptions (2 000+), their duration and enrolment details and entry requirements.

Employee inventory systems: With computer-based software, employers can record, store and retrieve data about employees, the positions they occupy and their career aspirations.

The procedure for creating or adapting commercially available software for an employee inventory system should include:

- Consultative and participatory processes to ensure acceptance of the outcome and the support of those involved—both management and employees
- Establishment of a cooperative climate for the acquisition of comprehensive and accurate employee data
- A methodology that is uncomplicated and readily understood by participating employees
- Information collated from every position holder, as employees best know their current jobs and the skill and competency levels required
- Data that is quantifiable to facilitate a variety of analyses
- A design which anticipates future requirements beyond the immediate purpose, so that the database can be extended rather than rewritten or re-compiled.

Employee inventory systems can assist the production of detailed position descriptions; represent both positions and job holders as profiles in graphic bar chart form so that visual identification of skill gaps can be made and illustrate where training could improve both employee contribution to the job demands as well as their personal development.

Such systems can provide data to assist management decision making concerning:

Award restructuring, training needs, career path options, performance measurement, job design, classification and evaluation and organisational restructuring. To achieve this, information needs to be incorporated in the database about:

- Employee and position identification
- Position tasks and duties
- Current knowledge, skills and abilities of employees
- Decision making, financial and human resource responsibilities, physical and social aspects of contacts for each job

There are many software products available which can be purchased and most enable access to existing payroll or other personnel data systems. A prominent one is PERUSE, available in Australia from HCS Australia.

Collection and maintenance of data for such systems can be costly. To make systems cost effective, the skills recorded in the systems should be limited to those evaluated as essential in the various jobs in the organisation; job requirements should be defined so that the inventory may be used to identify appropriate candidates. An inventory which does not include employees' preferences for target jobs is of limited use in identifying individuals for possible future jobs or in guiding individuals toward alternative career opportunities.

Evaluation of Career Software

There is a dramatic change from a situation where career support was provided only from hard copy, i.e. printed texts, such as reference books and indexes, and pen and paper tests for skill assessment, information and advice on interview behaviours to the wide variety of software programs available today. The use of software support systems is limited primarily by the knowledge of the employer making the selection and its financial resources. A thorough analysis of needs and an education phase as to what suitable software is available is required before a selection decision is made. The process needs to be exhaustive. The content of the software, intended method of use, extent and accuracy of information, the software file, or database, search strategy, hardware type and cost need to be taken into account. In addition it is necessary to make an evaluation of legal and ethical issues such as considering whether the databases reflect legal and social policies on equal opportunity, ensuring that the individuals' right to privacy is guarded, and copyright entitlements in relation to any assessment instruments within the package are clear. The identification of other user sites is important as it can be from this source that an evaluation of user usage and results can be obtained before a commitment is made to purchase and install the software.

Career Assessment Instruments

Current thinking holds that career and life management decision making is fuelled by information. Making choices should not be impulsive but should result from a sequential narrowing and specification of a choice of options that evolves as a person gathers information about self and their psychological characteristics and merges this with information they gain about the occupational and employment environment. Information about self also enables a person to estimate the probability of a particular career action step leading to certain outcomes. Inherent in this is the notion that people choose or perform their work depending on how they understand themselves and their situation. Faulty input into this quest for self-knowledge can imperil the desired outcomes. Hence, for many years researchers have sought to design assessment instruments which can assist the assembly of accurate information with regard to factors important to the process of choice.

In more formal terms, career assessment aided by instruments has the following purposes:

- First, to forecast the odds, the probabilities of individual success in educational, occupational, or other types of career and life direction options
- Second, to discriminate a myriad of data such as what are the person's actual values, interests, and preferences and whether these will be reflected in the job or employment environment being considered
- Third, to monitor the person's readiness and ability to choose, i.e. the level of their career maturity
- And fourth, assessment instruments can be used to evaluate different means of providing career development support to people

There are many instruments that people can use to aid them to complete and compile information that will be useful in their self-exploration, for matching options and for making decisions between alternatives. An excellent reference for the western world's most used instruments is *A Counselor's Guide to Career*

Assessment Instruments published by the National Career Development Association of USA. Also ACER (Melbourne) and Worklife (Sydney) provide an advisory service on what instruments are available and can recommend products which suit the need you have for this type of career support material.

There are norm-referenced instruments available which are standardised tests, or inventories which compare individual results with a previously established norm group. Users can compare their results with the 'normed' group. The disadvantage of this type of exploration is that though a person may be ranked well in comparison with a particular norm group, they may not in fact be able to perform the related job tasks well.

Another instrument type is termed criterion-referenced, and this determines the extent to which an individual can carry out important functions or tasks. This type of instrument is useful in determining whether the individual has the requisite skill or knowledge to accomplish a specific task or take on new responsibilities.

Instruments which encourage thoughtful self-exploration and usually take more time to complete than those described above involve stimulus questions. I have described this method of instrument usage in Chapter 3.

The remaining group of instruments are generally called preference or interest measures.

Preference and interests measurement: For many people, a legacy of their formal education is a belief that they should only show interest in work for which they have shown or developed a proven ability. When assessing the results they gain from using a career assessment instrument, they may also make the mistake of linking these results with only one job alternative. Employees may need encouragement and guidance in looking at the concept of developing a set of career action preferences rather than focusing on ability alone as the important factor in career planning. They may need to be assisted in utilising the knowledge gained from career assessment instruments to broaden their focus and embrace more than one career alternative. Through preference measurement, a person can obtain indications of career interests that either confirm their existing feelings or give them new insights into self.

In any situation, it is a person's interests which motivates them to seek a particular activity, and it is in practising this activity that ability is gained. As awareness of this fact increases, preference measurement is rapidly overtaking aptitude measurement in the field of psychometric testing and career assessment instrument development.

I will describe briefly some of the instruments used in preference measurement.

Card sort packs: Some career assessment instruments are available as card sort packs for helping people identify their preferred skills, for clarifying people's values and deciding from a number of possible choices. They also help in retirement planning, and also as prompts when compiling achievements and transferable skills for résumés. Card sorts use questions or activities or other stimulus materials printed on cards. The employee or client sorts the cards into a sequence of their own choice whilst talking to the career support helper about their reasons for sorting in a particular manner. The data in each sorted set of cards and the reasons given for the particular choices made are then used to examine criteria for a number of career action step options. Card sorts have the advantage that they are in the main an experiential learning facility which can be used both in workshops and in one-to-one support situations and have the added advantage that both in appearance and usage they do not look like (and are not) a test.

The most used card sort sets in Australia are the *Motivated Skills Card Sort* and *Career Values Card Sort* developed by Richard Knowdell and the *Résumé Training Card Sort* developed by Worklife.

DPA: Decision Preference Analysis (DPA), published by NIS Associates Pty Ltd, Sydney, is a self-scoring instrument which can be used in career assessment and which measures personal preferences. The aggregate time to complete it is twenty minutes. As almost all jobs involve a matter of preferences, if the tasks are to be successfully undertaken, it is important to make a measurement of a person's preferences coupled with an analysis, using the same criteria, of the job they are currently doing or to which they are considering changing. Jim Kable and Dick Hicks, while colleagues at the Department of Management, Queensland University of Technology, researched and designed DPA with well-established validation procedures to cover measurement of alternative job preferences, to identify training needs and to assist the management of mismatches between a person and job tasks. For career development purposes, DPA has many applications.

DPA is also useful in the planning of career paths which are not linear. The concept of linear career paths is based on the assumption that a marketing trainee should advance to marketing officer and in turn to marketing manager. DPA helps expand career path options by identifying cross-functional boundaries and contributes to highlighting job matches other than traditional or sequential ones. There is no reason why an employee cannot be moved from accounting to sales and on to production management, providing the person's preferences are matched as part of a planned career progression. "Ability is trainable; preference is not," states Kable. "In career path planning the ability of the incumbent in their present job is largely irrelevant. Promoting only on the basis that the person is doing well is hazardous and illogical. People are not that simple. Neither the person nor the organisation will benefit [by] using this criterion for career advancement."

The self-help feature of DPA is particularly appealing. It can stimulate employees to take more responsibility for their own future and to accumulate well-prepared data for deciding their own career actions. They can then prepare a case stating what they seek and why they merit it in ways which illustrate the benefits to both the employee and employer.

While training in scoring and interpretation is a prerequisite to administering DPA, its very nature has a significant contribution to the person completing it. With support from counselling, people can carry out their own opportunity awareness. Armed with greater knowledge about themselves derived from DPA and the criteria for matching alternative jobs, they can research their own job content changes or career moves within their employment environment and present their case for consideration to the appropriate manager.

The Strong: The concept of focusing diagnostic aids on preferences in career analysis is not new. The most widely used vocational interest instrument in the world is the Strong Interest Inventory (SCII), originally developed over forty years ago. The popularity of the Strong is a reflection of the importance placed on interests as a significant factor in determining job satisfaction and success. The SCII does not elicit information regarding intelligence, aptitudes, or skills, but interests and attitudes, by means of posing many questions.

The Strong is the interest inventory most widely used in the world as a tool for career path planning. It helps provide a means of understanding job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and is a functional means of establishing job-person fit. Career-Wise Pty Ltd of

Melbourne have carried out the necessary research, amendments and validation for the Strong to be used within Australia and provide accreditation training to people who plan to use the Strong in career support.

The Strong can help a person expand their knowledge of occupational interests, help understand their values and their developmental needs and provide a means for exploring the personal and organisational implications of their vocational interests. It is also useful as a catalyst in career review discussions with their manager or a career support counsellor.

WAPS: Another career assessment instrument with somewhat similar characteristics to DPA is the Work Aspect Preference Scale (WAPS), also researched and validated within Australia, devised by Robert Pryor, and published by ACER. WAPS is a psychological measure constructed to assess the qualities of work that individuals consider important to them. WAPS is used with Year 10 students, higher education students and adults. It is principally intended for use in a vocational counselling context to:

- Stimulate the exploration of preferences in relation to work
- Provide relevant data for both counsellor and client to facilitate vocational exploration and confirmation or negation of decisions associated with an individual's career development.

Campbell Interest and Skill Survey (CISS): This instrument, first published in 1992, provides an integrated measure of self-assessed interests and skills. Like traditional interest inventories, the interest scale reflects the person's degree of attraction to a specified occupational area. However, CISS goes beyond traditional inventories by adding a parallel skill scale that provides an estimate of the individual's confidence in his or her ability to perform various occupational activities. CISS can be used by career counsellors and by organisations to assist employees in career development, placement and job transition. It takes 35 minutes to complete CISS and the results are presented both numerically and graphically, with interpretative comments to facilitate self-interpretation.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: This instrument is one of the most widely used measures of personality preference. Based on Jung's theory of personality type and upon decades of research by its developers, this instrument provides information about personality traits and strengths that is understandable, non-threatening and useful for administering to individuals or groups.

Cautions: The caution when using 'pen and paper' or computer report generated instruments is that the person reviewing their own results may be more passive and less critical because of the 'authoritative' image of the response format, the manner of reporting and the vocabulary used. Alone, they are not sufficient data for effective career development actions. They serve their best purpose when used as ancillaries to other forms of self-assessment. The person completing these instruments should be given time to reflect and discuss the results.

By using carefully selected instruments an employee can develop better self-understanding. They measure or provide data about what the person is like, about their feelings about their current job, and the situation they would prefer to be in at a given point of time, i.e. the present. While contributing data about how the individual has arrived at their current level of worklife functioning, they provide key indicators for potential directions for career development. The data is useful to people who are endeavouring to determine their degree of satisfaction and success, and the projections can be incorporated into a career plan and schedule for goal attainment. But an employee is not well served if only one instrument is provided for developing their self-knowledge. The world of work is a complex and challenging environment where many factors combine to contribute to work performance, job satisfaction and inner well-being. At the very least the employee should be provided with instruments and/or self-search constructs which contribute data about their work-related preferences, values, motivations, preferred skills usage, work/life balance ratio and personal style.

Figure 41

CAREER ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS ON COMPUTER IN AUSTRALIA—1993

Title	Source	IBM / Apple
DPA—Decision Preference Analysis	NIS Associates	Mac
ACVII—The Australian Computerised Vocational Interest Inventory	Cassel Research Centre	IBM / Apple
Strong Interest Inventory (Australian Version)	Career-Wise Pty Ltd	IBM
The Self-Directed Search — C.P.	ACER	IBM / Apple
Work Aspect Preference Scale (Rammerath)	ACER	Apple
The Achievement Profile	Poulter Stanford Professional Personnel Advisers	IBM
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Abbreviated version)	ACER	IBM
Vocational Preference Inventory	ACER	IBM / Apple

Career Support Staff Resources

Staff assigned to career development support roles for employees need to assemble a range of materials, contacts and networks available outside the organisation in order to have on hand information to assist them in their tasks. Some of the more important resources follow:

Career support information needs: A person engaged in career counselling will find it useful to assemble a database of information sources and specialists for client referrals. A suggested index for such a database follows. Data can be added progressively:

Career assessment instruments
Career development consultants
Career development journals
Career planning workbooks
Career practitioners' networks
Careers of the future (emerging occupations)
Computer software systems
Distance education (tertiary by correspondence)
Dual-career couple issues
Employment agencies for the plus 45s
Employment agencies for those with physical/mental disabilities
Guides to counselling methods
Job sharing systems
Mentoring
Occupational information (job content descriptions)
Outplacement consultants
Outplacement procedures
Overseas and local conferences
Professional associations
Tapered retirement planning
Textbook publishers
Third age careers
Women's networks
Work and leisure research institutes
Worklife counsellors in private practice

AHRI Career Development and Skills Formation Network: Within the membership of the Australian Human Resources Institute, particularly in New South Wales, there is a strong interest in career development, to the extent that a special interest group and networking facility has been formed with educational events organised. The purpose is for members to gain information, share experiences, solve problems and initiate research projects. Recent guests from outside Australia at Network events have been Dr Deborah Bloch, Richard Nelson Bolles, Richard Knowdell and Dr Bobbie Floyd. The code of conduct for members is described in Figure 42.

Figure 42

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR AHRI CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS FORMATION NETWORK

As a network member I will:

- Assist the network to achieve its mission and vision by promoting the philosophy and benefits of best practice in career development and skills formation to key stakeholders, including the general community, industry, government and education institutions
- Foster a spirit of learning and discovery
- Welcome and nurture new members
- Share information with network members
- Declare any commercial or business interests sought as an outcome of network involvement. For example, stating at the outset, whether a contact is for business purposes or for that of the network
- Recognise AHRI must be provided first opportunity to publish any research, resource material, etc. which is generated by the network, while acknowledging Australian Copyright Council guidelines, which state that copyright remains with the individual author/s.

Associations of career counsellors: In 1989 a national association, the Australian Association of Career Counsellors, was formed to help promote career counselling as a professional discipline. It also serves the purpose of disseminating information, providing networking facilities for professionals engaged in the activity and consolidating data about this expanding field. Membership reflects the focus on both adult and teenage career transition issues and consists of counsellors from all states who work in schools, and government and commercial organisations, as well as in private practice.

The National Association of Graduate Careers Advisers, whose members are engaged in career transition support within higher education institutions, has been established for longer. For several years NAGCA has fostered the development of professional standards in student counselling, and through conferences, newsletters and publications, disseminates information from both overseas and local sources.

Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO): This is Australia's first classification and dictionary of occupations which has important applications to vocational guidance education and training, careers information and career counselling. It contains descriptions of several hundreds of occupations within the Australian economy and describes each in terms of a number of selected attributes and a broad definition of the tasks involved.

This resource aid is useful to career educators, career counsellors, students and counselling clients seeking to identify occupations which appear to match their needs and interests. As a preliminary aid in conducting the career transition stage of opportunity awareness a person could benefit from exploring its contents, providing they realise that any printed description is limited in describing the realities of the job content and environment in which the occupation is carried out. After reading this reference source it would be useful for research interviews to be used as a follow-up.

General publications: Although the number of career development texts available is increasing, they are not easy to locate within bookshops or libraries. Some are lodged under Psychology, others under Business, Reference or Women's Studies. Publishers such as Jossey-Bass, Brooks/Cole, Ten Speed Press, Worklife, Kogan Page, ACER, Impact Publications, VGM Books, Berrett-Koehler, Prentice-Hall are some of the more prominent publishers of such texts.

As experimentation and experience grows in relation to implementing career development support systems within organisations, useful data is appearing in print in articles and textbook form. Within Australia Dr Pamela Weir, Alastair Rylatt, Ann Rolfe-Flett, Imogen Wareing and myself are authors who focus their writings on their application within organisations. In the United Kingdom useful authors include Andrew Mayo and Tony Watts, for example, and in the USA, Manuel London, Edward M. Mone, C. Brooklyn Derr, E. H. Schein, Zandy B. Leibowitz, D. Hall, E. H. Burack, Beverly L. Kaye, D. Feldman, Fred L. Otte, Stephen Stumpf and D. J. Levinson, Thomas Gutteridge, JoAnn Harris-Bowlsbey, Deborah Bloch and many more. Bibliography searches will reveal the expanding range of this subject matter and the book titles produced by these writers. Many are listed in the Bibliography to this book.

There is an increasing number of computer-aided databases being maintained and expanded which can be useful for career research. One example is the Register of Women in Non-Traditional Occupations compiled by the Women's Directorate within the Federal Department of Industrial Relations and Employment. You can find out the names of those women who have direct experience in non-traditional occupations who can act as role models. The Register administrators have established a forum where ideas, hopes, achievements, problems and solutions can be exchanged.

Journals of career management: There is an International Journal of Career Management published by MCB University Press which draws on research findings and practical in-company developments where new ways of creating flexible career paths have been devised to maximise individual potential. Writers from around the world contribute to such topics as human resource planning and forecasting, ability and skills testing, new career paths and structures, validation studies of selection tests, descriptions of career workshops and their outcomes, and new concepts and programs in career management.

It is a vehicle for communication among academics, researchers and practitioners in career development and personnel management areas. Human resource professionals could benefit from its contents if they are engaged in career choice counselling, personnel administration, manpower planning, training and organisational development.

In 1993 the Australian Journal of Career Development published by the Australian Council for Educational Research was inaugurated as a professional publication, with four issues scheduled each year. The editorial policy is to help subscribers keep up with

Figure 43

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CAREER MANAGEMENT

Aims

The International Journal of Career Management facilitates communication between all those who ask the question—how can we help people develop their careers and talents within the rapidly changing work environment? Academics, researchers and, most importantly, practitioners, pool their findings to offer advice on all the issues facing employees, managers, and personnel and training specialists. The journal concerns itself with employees at all levels across a range of industries and at every stage in their career. The aim is to furnish readers with a total view of all the issues and developments surrounding a topic that is now high on the agenda of modern organisations.

Coverage

A wide range of articles cover both the theory and the practice of all aspects of career management, including:

- New career paths and career structures
- Career development programs
- Ability and skills testing
- Career path stories from around the world
- Psychological testing
- Human resource planning and forecasting
- Vocational testing and guidance
- Recruitment and selection technologies
- Career assessment workshops
- Coaching and counselling
- Individual and team goal clarification
- Career path and manpower surveys

All articles lead to practical recommendations for future action. Readers will also find the special section on new products, programs, assessment instruments, events and books particularly useful in keeping up-to-date in this rapidly developing field.

(Publisher: MCB University Press, London) current theory, practice and policy in career education; to learn about new issues in occupational information and about trends in the labour market; and to provide information in relation to the training needs of career practitioners and how they might deliver the best service to employees, clients or students seeking their support.

Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER): This service organisation has played a key role in nurturing the use of psychometric tests and career assessment and the measurement of interests as an integral part of the career guidance process. It is the main source of test and instrument development and diagnostic resource material within Australia. It has extended its range of available resources to include many forms of self-directed career analysis and career planning materials and computer-based software for career guidance and assessment.

ERIC: The ERIC Clearing-house on Adult, Career and Vocational Education provides assistance to inquirers from around the world by making referrals, providing data searches, answering subject-specific questions and issuing, usually at no cost, syntheses of information relating to career transitions for all ages. Based at the University of Ohio in the USA, ERIC provides a wealth of relevant information about many aspects of career development and associated support systems for both the able-bodied and the disadvantaged person.

Innovative Services

Life planning support for family members: I have valued the experience of examining the design, service delivery and usage of an initiative by the US Postal Service, who established thirty-five Life Work Planning Centers for use not only by their employees but also their family members, both young and the mature aged. Often open during the daytime and the evenings, these centres feature information resources for the 'whole person' in four categories: family, leisure, work and learning. They are based on the philosophy that career planning is a lifelong process which extends beyond work and encompasses the three other learning needs areas mentioned. Resources have been selected to enhance the quality of the users' lives both on and off the job.

For example, among the self-help resources within the centres, I noticed a software program which incorporates a specially designed home purchase analysis framework, which helps the user evaluate all of the relevant financial aspects of buying a home. Other resources included a speed reader which strengthens and trains the user's eyes to read more efficiently, and a program called 'The Art of Negotiating' for users to learn how to solve problems and answer questions in preparation for an actual negotiation situation in their personal or employment scene.

Aren't the survivors lucky?: Of the many myths about the current widespread practice of downsizing, the belief that those who were not terminated are the lucky ones is the hardest to dispel. My experience has been that many survivors feel guilty regarding displaced work colleagues, feel awkward, are often shell shocked, exhibit low morale, are apprehensive about being expected to achieve more at work with less, fear future redundancies and distrust management. A career resource centre can play an important part in these circumstances. Employees can be encouraged to access it and use the resources. The customers of the centre are likely to grow and benefit from its existence. The willingness to trust the employer again and re-establish good feelings can be a welcome outcome. Security from an employer is no longer a real expectation. For career security, an employee needs to become more independent and take care of their own career. In the process, they give themselves security.

The Rights Associates of Philadelphia, a large career management and human resources consulting firm, assisted Nabisco Foods Group with this process. Using a resource centre approach coupled with workshops for survivors, they articulated the objectives of their career support centre program as:

- To understand and accept change as a fact of life
- To bring to the surface, recognise and accept their feelings and stress related to the recent changes and see ways to manage change positively
- To complete a thorough self-analysis based on personal strengths and talents
- To accept responsibility for their own feelings and behaviour regarding future career decisions
- To see how to take control of their job and career

- To the degree possible, to let go of their feelings associated with what they cannot control and turn their attention to the future where they have some control
- To restore motivation, productivity levels and a sense of direction to employees and to the organisation they serve

Self-help support clubs: What can people do to support the career transitions of others when they do not feel equipped with knowledge or experience to help directly themselves? This question is often asked during the seminars I lead on worklife issues.

A self-help support club is a service that needs your time, rather than skills in career support delivery. It's a way you can provide constructive assistance to people in the area where you are employed without it being viewed as a charitable handout. Also, it could earn your employer or community organisation increased regard within the community.

A self-help club needs only the minimum of formal organisation. They can be initiated by service groups such as Rotary, Apex or Lions, chambers of commerce, employer or industry associations, or unions. Alternatively, your firm could initiate one on the understanding that there is no commitment to employ those who join. All that needs to be provided is a meeting place and help with creating awareness of the self-help club's formation. If access to reference libraries, subsidised canteen, typewriters, stationery and telephones is also provided, that's a bonus.

Self-help clubs function on the principle that when people who are in a similar predicament meet they energise and catalyse one another and multiply the skills applied to each person's problems—not unlike Alcoholics Anonymous. They can help many readjust to active personal career management, and encourage people to climb out of the states of depression which paralyse some from making any attempt to improve their situation or emotional state.

Self-help groups have a useful humanitarian and practical purpose wherever there is an urgent need to protect from loss of self-confidence, alleviate the stress of being confused and/or feelings of powerlessness in adverse employment situations. They provide a forum for fellow members and help to avoid hasty or ill-conceived decisions. Members can test out their ideas and receive feedback as to whether their plans are feasible and realistic.

In established self-help groups, graduates of successful career transitions often return to the meetings and chair the proceedings, share how they secured their change, and bolster the morale of those still searching for an improvement in their worklife. People having difficulty in finding answers to their employment dilemmas often feel that they have an unusual problem that prevents them from achieving success. After they've tried for what seems like too long a period, despondency can set in. The greatest single obstacle to achieving their employment goal is the loneliness which often goes hand in hand with this despondency—the sort of loneliness which reduces self-confidence, and makes the problem more stressful than it really should be.

A self-help club can help share the weight of this situation. By helping in its formation, you could be providing many with the critical nudge they require to get back to constructive activity. Your gesture in organising a self-help club could break this paralysis of loneliness which affects so many in our community. If your employer operates from 9 to 5, your facilities and office/training equipment are lying idle outside these hours and could be used by people in real need. If you have a meeting or training room which is unused for part of the day, or evening, allow it to be the base for a self-help club facility. Take time out for the next ten minutes and consider who you can approach to assist you to get a self-help club under way. It's not much to ask . . . you might need this kind of support yourself one day.

7 Career Systems Evaluation

Career Development Program Measurement

The validity of the argument that career development is life-span oriented and support services should be delivered throughout our adult years is now well established. But no team of executive managers is going to approve open-ended long-term support programs and services without requiring a measurement of the return on investment and a report on the results obtained from the expenditure of time and money. Indicators of desired outcomes and also service standards need to be researched and established as integral parts of career support activities. The standards should provide the criteria for setting up new services, evaluating the effectiveness of ongoing services and improving the quality of service delivery. Composite statistics will need to be assembled to reveal information about the performance of such services and provide a barometer for the well-being of the organisation and the human resources employed.

Today, human resource policies are being designed to devolve more day-to-day personnel and career support related work to the line functions. This demands that more user-friendly facilities be readily accessible to managers and staff who have not been trained in career development theory and practice. It is no longer sufficient that the 'expert' in the personnel department be the resource for all queries—in fact, in restructured organisations there are fewer of them! Devolving accountability for career management will require extra care in the design of measurement methods and the use of terms which are readily understood by employees. It should not be necessary to issue a glossary of 'careerspeak'.

The design and implementation process utilised for achieving change should not be determined as it has been in the past, namely developed by personnel staff, commented on and authorised by management, then issued to all staff. The subtleties of identifying the 'stake-holders', and managing an implementation plan that provides sufficient debate in the design and scheduling phase to ensure that the stakeholders have felt an ownership along the way is now more imperative in organisational life as we come to the close of this century. Where culture change and employee behaviour adjustment is one of the key objectives, a rewrite and promulgation of existing career development policy will not produce anything worthy of measurement

In the United States much progress has been made on developing these performance measurements. In Australia we are in the early stages of developing them. A useful reference can be obtained from the ERIC Clearinghouse in Ohio (see Bibliography) in their publication *Competency-Based Career Development Strategies* and the *National Career Development Guidelines: Information Series* No. 345 by H. Splete and A. Stewart.

A major point made by those experienced in the evaluation of such programs is that not only should the features of the service be measured but also the program processes.

Measurement of career development support needs to take into account the following: such programs are not a panacea for all human resource management concerns; how staff feel about the services may depend on their position in the organisation and the events in their personal lives at the time of measurement; shortcomings will inevitably occur when service plans move from paper to reality; the current degree of 'nervousness about security' in the community at large will affect the results. It is modern management practice to initiate such services, but despite the difficulties, it's also essential to know where, why and how you are going to implement, manage and appraise them.

Some of the misdirections and therefore poor measurement results I have observed within organisations include:

- The support services do not clearly designate nor communicate who in the employee population is covered, or how
- The implementors, whether human resource management staff or line managers, are untrained, unread in the subject matter, and view the responsibility as an added burden
- Employees lack the knowledge required to make adequate career plans and decisions. No life planning skills tuition was included
- Organisational career development support practices operate within the organisation without the full knowledge or participation of staff

- The support services program lacks overall organisation, or has been copied from a different organisation's culture without amendment
- There is a deficiency in knowledge and skill in determining how to promulgate the range of support services available to the target employees
- One service only has been offered, most likely career workshops, without infrastructure support nor other integrated career support services
- The program was the inspiration of one member of management, rather than being selected by executive management as an important organisational management process. Career development is not an isolated concept to be applied only when considering the future of an individual employee but is a basic managerial orientation
- The promulgation of a self-help policy to staff for managing their own careers with access to employer-provided support has not been done or was inadequate

Career Program Evaluation

Proper evaluation includes focusing on benefits to both individuals and to the organisation. The criteria for success must be clearly defined. Evaluation strategies need to be planned, results reported and necessary changes made before the support service is repeated and further events announced.

The goal of evaluation is to arrive at a point of affirmative assessment in which the organisation finds itself able to meet its resource needs with staff who have developed the capabilities required, and they in turn demonstrate their belief that their changing needs for personal growth and career development are given consideration by their employer. Few people will then leave because of frustration over career issues and far less people will fail in their new jobs because they lack the capability to carry out the jobs to which they are appointed in the first place. The development of staff is then accepted comfortably as a responsibility of all who hold managerial positions, and the potential to meet today's staffing needs and a valid estimate of tomorrows is then known, documented and quantified. Best practice in the organisation's career development support services is benchmarked regularly so that the most advanced thinking, research and practice is incorporated into the programs. The people involved in delivery of career support services do so with well regarded integrity. All these standards are possible from the knowledge base we have today about adult career development, the world of work and the vagaries of one's journey through life.

Whatever method is selected for program evaluation there are five distinct phases. The first is to establish the purpose, then the second stage is to design the data collection. Third, analyse the data, then proceed to the fourth stage of reporting the findings. The concluding phase is to make decisions and act on the findings.

The following are indicators of career program results. Indicators may be objective or subjective. Remember that objective indicators are not necessarily the best proof of results because indicators by themselves do not always confirm positive results. Consider selecting your criteria for success from these indicators:

1. Indicators for the organisation
    - A. Actions —managers are:
        - Conducting career discussions
        - Establishing career enrichment review practices and employee assistance
        - Publicising career development support as a recruitment attraction
    - B. Accomplishments
        - Analysis of various indices: staff retention, performance ratings, change in frequency of performance appraisals, productivity, absenteeism, attitudes, EEO complaints, public image as a place to work, time required to fill job openings, internal hires (e.g. promotions, transfers) improved
        - Identification of and action on career development needs of special interest groups (e.g. Aborigines, other minorities, dual-career couples)
        - Improved match between training programs and organisational needs
        - More visibility of women, minority and various ethnic groups in key positions on a personal merit basis rather than a 'quota-orientated' approach
        - Reduction of manager/employee communication problems

C. Attitudes
  - Attitude of employees towards effort expended on career support services
  - Benefit perceived by employees
  - Commitment of managers to specific career development responsibilities

2. Indicators for the individual

A. Actions
  - Reaffirmation of advantages of/interests in current job
  - Career discussions initiated with manager
  - Evidence of a plan of personal career development
  - Initiatives towards self-development
  - Seeking new opportunities for contributing to the needs of the organisation
  - Reassessment of career goals or skills development activities

B. Accomplishments
  - Evidence of review or adjustment of career plans
  - New or altered career expectations
  - Clarity and realism of next-step career goals
  - Improved ability to take advantage of, or create, career opportunities
  - Better knowledge about internal career path options

C. Decisions
  - Taking personal responsibility for decisions
  - Stay with, transfer or leave current organisation
  - Change career direction
  - Movement from a state of indecision to a specific decision
  - Altered plans and actions for pursuing a career goal

D. Attitudes
  - Attitudes towards effort expended on career support
  - Renewed interest in current career direction
  - Willingness to take charge of one's own life

Focus groups: What career development support is perceived to be and how it affects individuals is best learned by hearing from those who have experienced it. Measuring the impact of career support services can be carried out by conducting either question and answer surveys or focus group meetings with staff, or both.

The preferred procedure is for volunteers to be sought and gathered into a room for a structured discussion managed by an experienced trainer. The critical factor in the conduct of focus groups is that the trainer facilitates the discussion but takes care not to impose any expectations of what the responses should be nor any indication of desired outcomes of the meeting. The role is to record the group members points of view about their career support in an unexpurgated manner. The trainer may guide the group into assessing the priority of the factors they proffer according to the degree of importance the members feel.

Once collated, this data can be analysed for trends in opinions on possible improvement or otherwise on different features of career support services. If a large number of focus groups are conducted, the data may be analysed through the use of relevant software. Graphic representations of staff's views can then be produced for review by the accountable officers for career services activities and for use in reports to executive management.

A procedure for the conduct of focus groups may read:

> Silent generation of opinions: Each person is presented with a piece of paper which has a nominal question at the top of the page, and they are asked to list in ten minutes as many responses as they wish.
>
> Round-robin listing: One viewpoint from each person is listed progressively in such a way that all members can see what is recorded. No discussion at this stage is initiated during this listing procedure.
>
> Discussion: Clarification, elaboration and evaluation of each opinion listed is facilitated by the trainer. Views that are regarded as similar or very closely related may now be linked as one item.
>
> Prioritisation: Each person independently rates the importance of each item on the list; then, ranks each according to their personal view of how important it is to continue with the service, improve it or cancel it.

> Assessment: This data is collated to arrive at the group's selection of evaluations and priorities for action.

An audit of organisational practices: A variation on the method of focus group opinion measurement is for a number of employees to carry out an audit by sharing their collective views in small groups and seeking agreement among their group members for a rating of support service effectiveness. This measurement process is illustrated in Figure 44.

Figure 44

AUDITING YOUR ORGANISATION'S CAREER SUPPORT SERVICE PRACTICES

The following audit of your organisation's practices is to be carried out in a group. Form into groups of no less than three. In organising the membership of each group, ensure, if practical, that there is no more than one person from each operational area of business (personnel, sales, marketing, finance, production, etc.).

Consider each career management service listed on the chart which follows; to each service assign a rating between 0—10, where 10 is the highest grade. Base your assessment on the following factors:

a. The extent to which the career development support service is known to **managers** within your organisation

b. How well the service is carried out

c. The extent to which you consider **employees** are aware of its existence

d. How relevant to their career development needs you think the service is regarded by employees

Discuss the ratings within your group and seek consensus about what actions can be taken within your organisation in the short-term to improve the identified deficiencies. Record your resolutions on the different actions.

Chart for Figure 44

EMPLOYER'S CAREER MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- Realistic recruitment specifications
- Performance results-orientated job descriptions
- Participative performance reviews
- Promotion based on clear performance criteria
- Regular remuneration reviews
- Rewarding managers for developing staff
- Communication of internal vacancies
- Employee self-nomination procedures for promotion or transfer
- Occupational retraining programs
- Computer-assisted facilities for learning
- Self-help materials, such as workbooks, texts
- Availability of career assessment instruments, interest and skill measurement inventories, etc.
- Skills training and personal development courses
- Career planning help
- Published organisation charts
- Downward transfers/fallback position opportunities
- Provision of mentors
- External third party counselling services subsidised by employer
- Flexible work attendance patterns
- Job rotation facilities
- Retraining programs
- Equitable early retirement incentives
- Outplacement help for terminating staff

Career Support Staff Evaluation

A staff member providing forms of career development support within an employment environment may be carrying out such tasks (a) as a part of other approved duties or (b) as a full-time provider. I have found many cases within Australian organisations where (c) the staff member is generously providing such services when they are not specified in the job description or performance objectives for the position they hold. This in itself is a career hazard for the incumbent! A wise career strategy is to ensure the support you are providing is specified within your job description and thereby endorsed by the employer for whom you work.

All three of the above ways in which support is provided present a challenge in defining the support services in terms which are readily comprehensible and to which performance measurement standards can be applied. What follows is a series of descriptions of career support competencies which can serve as a reference point or glossary of terms from which can be selected the relevant terminology to apply to a specific career support job role and, in turn, to measurable performance objectives.

A definition: Career support consists of those activities performed or coordinated by individuals who facilitate the decision making of other individuals or groups of individuals about occupations, careers, life-career, career decision making, career planning, career pathing, or other career development-related questions or work and family conflicts. These activities can be designated as counselling, information, individual-group assessment, management/administration, implementation and consultation.

Counselling skills: Counselling competencies important for achieving effective career counselling include:

- Knowledge of career counselling theories and techniques
- Skills in building a productive relationship between counsellor and client
- Ability to use appropriate counselling techniques in effectively assisting individuals with career choice and life-career development concerns
- Ability to help the employee/client recognise the relationship between self-understanding and effective life-career decisions

- Ability to assist the employee/client in the identification of internal personal factors related to life-career decision making including personality, values, interests, aptitudes and motives
- Skills in recognising and modifying stereotypes held by employees/clients related to career choice; ability to assist the client in the identification of contextual factors in career decision making including family, friends, educational opportunities, and finances
- Ability to understand and teach the employee/client decision-making processes

Information: This requires:

- Knowledge of tertiary education, training, employment and labour market trends and career resources that provide information about job tasks, functions, remuneration levels, and future outlooks related to broad occupational fields
- Knowledge of basic concepts related to career counselling including career development, career pathing and career patterns
- Knowledge of career development and decision-making theories
- Knowledge of the changing roles of women and men and the language of work, family and leisure
- Knowledge of resources and techniques designed for use with special groups, e.g. multi-cultural, third-age adults, the disabled
- Knowledge of strategies to store, retrieve and disseminate career and life management information

Individual/group assessment: These skills are demonstrated by:

- Knowledge of assessment instruments and measures of aptitude, achievement, interest, values and personality
- Knowledge of strategies used in the evaluation of job performance, individual effectiveness and career support program effectiveness

- Ability to identify assessment instrument resources appropriate to specific employee/client situations and employee populations
- Ability to evaluate assessment resources and techniques in terms of their validity, reliability and accommodation of race, sex, age and ethnicity
- Ability to demonstrate the proper administration of assessment techniques; ability to interpret data for employees/clients and other appropriate individuals or groups of people
- Ability to assist employees/clients in appraising quality of life and working environments

Management and administration: Skills necessary to develop, plan, implement and manage comprehensive career development programs include:

- Knowledge of program designs that can be used in the organisation of career development services; knowledge of needs assessment techniques and practices
- Knowledge of performance objectives used in organising career development programs and setting goals and comprehensive career development programs
- Knowledge of management concepts and leadership styles used in relation to career development programs
- Ability to adjust management and administration methods to reflect identified career development program problems and specified situational needs
- Ability to prepare budgets and time lines for career development programs
- Ability to design, compile and report on evaluation of career development activities and programs

Implementation: The adoption of career development programs and strategies in a variety of settings demands:

- Knowledge of program adoption and planned change strategies
- Ability to implement individual and group programs in career development for specified populations

- Knowledge of personal and environmental barriers affecting the implementation of career development programs
- Ability to implement a public relations effort on behalf of career development activities and services
- Ability to devise and implement a comprehensive career resource centre
- Ability to implement pilot programs in a variety of career development areas including assessment, decision making, information giving and general career counselling, assistance with job move planning and résumé development

Consultation: To be effective in relating to individuals within and external to the employment environment and to organisations such as unions, tribunals, professional associations and networks that have an impact on the career development process requires:

- Knowledge of consultation strategies and consultation models
- Ability to provide career development consultation to business and professional groups
- Ability to convey program goals and achievements to key personnel in positions of authority—executives and others
- Ability to provide data on the cost-effectiveness of career counselling and career development support activities

Once an adequate description of a career support role has been defined and approved, the outputs for each task and how they will be measured should be determined. Discussions with the appropriate manager and executive management team can then clarify the order of importance in which the agreed objectives are to be tackled and staff and monetary resources allocated.

Workshop Evaluation

Participant evaluation should be an important part of any training program. Career training should not be an exception. One way to do this is to ask participants one or two months after their attendance to record their views on the value of the workshop. To measure participants' views at the conclusion of the training event is less likely to give a reliable reckoning of its effectiveness. The use of the term 'happy sheets' to describe evaluation forms at the conclusion of training events indicates the concern about their validity among the training fraternity. Measurement some time after the training event can be further sophisticated by including evaluations before the event as well as after, and also by administering two sets to 'control' groups i.e. those who did not participate and those who did.

Here is a design suggestion in Figure 45 which you can adapt to suit your situation.

Figure 45

CAREER WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Please complete this form to enable us to evaluate the career support training you have recently received. Any suggestions you make will be welcomed.

a. The following is a list of potential outcomes from the workshop. Tick (✓) those that apply to you.

☐ Redesign of my job to make it valuable to my career
☐ Increased satisfaction with my job
☐ Increased understanding of myself and my career needs
☐ A realisation that I am already doing what I like
☐ A new job outside the organisation
☐ Increased awareness of my skills, values and interests
☐ Knowledge of how to develop contacts to gain information
☐ A résumé appropriate for my next career move
☐ Identification of a job I can prepare for (a 'target' job)
☐ Contacts in other departments who can help me in my career
☐ Contacts in my current department who can help me in my career
☐ An improved relationship with my boss about my career
☐ Improved information about job possibilities
☐ Feedback from others about the viability of different career paths
☐ A career action plan produced
☐ Implementation of my career action plan

- ☐ Enrolment in other career development programs or training courses
- ☐ Talks about career development plans with my peers
- ☐ Increased motivation to work actively towards developing my career
- ☐ A new job within my department
- ☐ Less satisfaction with my job
- ☐ A new job in a different department
- ☐ Other:

____

____

b. Did the training program meet the trainer's stated objectives? YES/NO Please comment:

____

c. Which of the sessions contributed most to achieving the objectives?

____

d. Which were the most valuable sessions for you and why?

____

e. Which were the least valuable sessions for you and why?

____

f. Has this training succeeded in making you more aware of self-help measures for progressing your career? Please comment.

____

g. What additional information or practical work do you feel you still need in managing your career effectively?

____

h. What changes could be made to improve the effectiveness of the training?

____

i. Name (optional) ______________________________

Resource Centre Evaluation

When evaluating a resource centre the measurement factors include: cost versus usefulness, the respect with which the contents are treated and handled, proportion of employee population using the facilities—these are a few of the many factors to be considered. The Canadian University and College Placement Association provides a practical guide to this process in their publication, *Developing a Career Information Centre.*

There are excellent referral materials for the evaluation of much of the typical content of a resource centre and these are obtainable from the National Career Development Association of America. One is a publication, *Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of Video Career Media,* another is *Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of Career and Occupational Literature.* A third publication in the same style concerns the evaluation criteria for computer-based career guidance software.

Mentoring Program Measurement

Margo Murray, President of The Managers Mentors, Inc. C.A., has written a very thorough account of mentoring programs in her book, *Beyond The Myths and Magic of Mentoring* (Jossey-Bass, 1991), which has now been translated into several languages. The following questions reflect Margo's experiences and are ones that she considers to be essential in evaluating a mentor program:

Why did we start this program in the first place? What do we want the mentoring program to do for the organisation? How do we define success? What will we do with the results of the evaluation? What data must we have to make decisions about the nature of the program? How can we get the data we need? What reporting will be required of mentors? protégés? the co-ordinator?

Her book is a 'must read' for those who want to not only make their mentoring programs work but also protect their own career image in the process.

David Clutterbuck in *Everyone Needs a Mentor* (Institute of Personnel Management, UK, second edition, 1991) suggests building in check points in the program by arranging regular meetings with mentors and the program coordinators, encouraging protégés to write up reports describing their mentor relationships and what they learned from them, and using a questionnaire to collect data as to whether the program has made a significant contribution to the careers of those participating in it.

A further useful source for guidance on mentor program evaluation is The Mentoring Institute, Inc., 675 Inglewood Avenue, West Vancouver BC V7T 1X4, Canada.

The Crystal Ball

The workplace: Continued turbulence in the workplace is likely to continue for many years. Corporate instability, restructuring of public services, more retrenchments, more unemployment, a possibly permanent reduction in middle managers and new legislation protecting the older worker and the work and family interrelationship will occur. Managers will need to guard against misinterpreting differences in career orientation among employees, as many more will be interested in a balanced life and their non-career or non-work activities. It will not necessarily mean that they are less loyal, less productive or less valuable.

There will be a continued need to restore the morale of those who survive organisational restructuring, and to help them deal with the ambivalence and guilt many will experience. Employee attitudes and enthusiasms will need to be revitalised and the pursuit of multiple careers and the necessary extension of skills and knowledge during the employment life of an employee facilitated. The utilisation of talent will become a more important organisational imperative. In order for data about human resource requirements to be utilised effectively, this will require a greater degree of access to the career talents—the self-knowledge—of those human resources employed.

Employees will need to be helped to come to terms with reduced expectations and the occurrence of career plateaus at an earlier age. They will need to be encouraged to view themselves as having the ability to take a more versatile approach to performing a variety of jobs than is currently the case. More frequently will the frustrated cry for help, "My career has been derailed" come from staff. Promotions, pay increases and employee benefit extensions will slow up and almost come to a standstill when compared with their incidence in the past twenty years.

Laws affecting termination will become more complicated and legally hazardous. There will be a growing need to provide assistance to the non-performing employee rather than fire the person. Effective career support services are an insurance against the pitfalls of litigation arising from disenchanted staff and employer-employee disputes.

Career support staff: Undergraduate and postgraduate training for the study of adult career development theory and practice within our tertiary education system needs to be improved by expanding the content of such training and increasing the access to learning facilities. Furthermore, ways will need to be devised whereby inexperienced career development practitioners can practise their skills in a supervised setting with experienced career development staff as mentors. The near future will see the introduction of accreditation in Australia for people who wish to provide career support in private practice settings or consulting services to organisations.

There will be continued emphasis on the self-knowledge area in helping adults look at potential changes and transitions in their lives. New ways of administering assessment instruments and providing career information will occur. Already CD-ROM-I (Interactive media) technology is on the market, with software applications to facilitate this process. Career planning activities will further expand to an understanding of the impact of work on individuals and family life and the continuing change in male/female roles. For example, the television series *Brain Sex* which went to air in 1993 in Australia presented new evidence that women's identity formation and ways of knowing differ from those of men and that some women make career decisions based on interpersonal relationships or anchors and a more subjective way of knowing.

Staff who work as career development practitioners develop a unique perspective on the personality traits, beliefs, and behaviours that impede or facilitate career and professional growth within their employment environment. In turn they will become more valuable and needed and respected by the organisation which employs them. Their future is more secure than many others. Their professional skills will be more and more in demand.

The spiritual aspect in life planning/purpose and belief systems will receive much more attention. For much of the past twenty-five years Richard Nelson Bolles has been a lone voice on the linkage between spiritual aspects of career counselling and career support over the span of a person's life. No longer is he alone, as the contents of periodicals and professional journals now attest.

The majority of adult career theorists since 1970 have based their research and subsequent models on Anglo-Saxon males—a Western world concept. In Australasia we have many multicultural factors to consider, as our populations are comprised of people from European descent and from Asian, Melanesian, Latino, Aboriginal, Hispanic and African heritage. The Western world emphasises rational, linear career decision making which focus on an internal locus of control and the definition of long term goals. Cultural and gender based research shows that kin, religion and the extended family each play a role in the emphasis taken in making life management decisions.

Career development support for employees is already an urgent requirement for an organisation to be competitive in today's operating environment. It goes hand in hand with quality management procedures. It's not just an expense—it's business protection and an investment in the employees and the future. As a strategic business objective, career development support magnifies the employees' potential to sustain a competitive advantage well into the future. After all, the employees develop, acquire, plan, manage and produce the work of the organisation. In fact, they generate the revenue and services without which it would not exist.

8 Bibliography & Useful Further Reading

Curiosity is growing substantially around the world about adult career development and the transitions made, the desire to know how and why they are achieved, how organisations view career support activities and their experiences. University students are electing to research and analyse this subject area. Human resource officers within the private and public sector are seeking more information and resources to assist their design of in-company services. The general public, either through expected or unexpected events or non-events in their lives, are wanting to know more in order to help themselves.

What follows are resources which were researched and evaluated in the process of writing this book and therefore constitute a useful guide to readers who want to explore in more detail different aspects of adult career development and organisational career development support:

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